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BY
A SISTER OF THE CONGREGATION OF
ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA
(STONE)

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION, BY
THE VERY REV. FATHER PROCTER, S.T.L.
PROVINCIAL OF THE ENGLISH DOMINICANS

*“ Christi pia gratia Sanctos sublimavit,
Quos Patris Dominici Ordo propagavit ;
Nos eorum meritis petimus juvari,
Atque suis precibus Deo commendari.”*

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Die 8 Januarii 1900

By
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2. 5
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IN obedience to the Decrees of Urban VIII. of March 13, 1625, and July 5, 1634, we declare that, when giving the title of Saint or Blessed to any persons of high virtue mentioned in these pages, or when speaking of miraculous and extraordinary deeds and events, we only do so in accordance with the usage of ordinary language, without meaning in any way to anticipate the judgment of Holy Church.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is an album of Dominican pictures. The pictures are word-painted and not limned in crayon or oil; they are drawn with a graphic pen and not painted with an artist's brush. They are pictures all the same—lifelike, faithful, and true. Each chapter—and there are nearly a hundred of them—is a portrait, the original of which once lived in a Dominican cloister, in a Convent home, in an ancestral hall, in a princely or noble mansion, or, like Jesus at Nazareth, in a lowly cottage amongst simple, humble, working folk who earned their daily bread by the sweat of their brow. They are offered to the reader for his study, his admiration, and maybe even for his imitation. There are lights and shades in all these pictures, as there are lights and shades in every human life, if we except one, that was ever lived, or will be lived, from Eden to Jehosophat, from the dawn of creation to its doom. Each of these pictures tells its own story, each teaches its own lesson, each preaches its own sermon, each is a picture from life and from a holy life—for each is the life of a Saint. The word *Saint* is used in its comprehensive sense. All, the stories of whose lives are here briefly told, are not canonized Saints. Some are only “Beati” or the beatified of Saint Dominic's Order. They await the Church's final seal. Not one of the very large number beatified by the voice of the people, but not as yet declared blessed by the voice of the Church, finds a place in this book.

There are several portraits introduced into this Dominican series over which Saint Dominic has no right or claim. They are painted here because they have a claim upon him and his, on account of signal services rendered to the Order in the hour of the Order's need. Saint Augustine of Hippo, whose Rule Saint Dominic adopted in accordance with the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council prohibiting the introduction of new religious Rules; Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Dominic's twin brother, "brought forth together by Holy Mother Church," as the old chronicler puts it, although their ways were divided and their lives were lived apart; Saint Servatius, who, on a memorable occasion, did spiritual yeoman's service in the interest of Saint Dominic's sons; Saint Mary Magdalen, and Saint Catharine, the Virgin Martyr of Alexandria, each of whom is called "Protectrix of the Order," for reasons given in their respective Lives. To these are added two Feasts intimately connected with Dominican life and work—the Feast of Our Lady's Patronage and the pre-eminently Dominican Feast of Rosary Sunday.

These Lives are necessarily "short," since all have to be compressed between the two covers of a single octavo volume. Their very brevity may add to their charm, and may induce many to read them. *L'appétit vient en mangeant*. Perhaps, having read these, they may be drawn to read other Lives of the same Saints which are more exhaustive than these, owing to the limited space allowed to each, can possibly be. Though necessarily miniatures, the pictures in this album are faithfully drawn—drawn from life. The principal authorities from which the facts are taken are Marchese's "Diario Domenicano," the Lessons in the Dominican Breviary, and the excellent work, "L'Année Dominicaine." Although the "Année Dominicaine" already

numbers sixteen large volumes, the compilers have only as yet reached the end of the month of August. Consequently the writer of these little sketches has not had the invaluable help of that work in drawing up the histories of the Saints whose Feasts occur in the four months subsequent to August. For, as will be seen, the order followed in these short Lives is neither alphabetical nor chronological; it is the one suggested by the Calendar of the Dominican rite.

The lesson of the Lives is not far to seek; the object of the writer, if hidden, is hidden behind a transparent veil. The short suggestive prayer at the end of each chapter reveals the design in the author's mind, the prayers being translations of the Collects said in the Mass on the Saint's Feast.

"Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas"

means that painters and poets have always had the power of daring whatever their fancy prompted. The "fancy" of the word-painter of this Dominican album was assuredly this—to make the sainted children of Saint Dominic speak after death, preach by their lives, and carry on their apostolate amongst men. The book now offered to the pious reader is the result—the happy result—of this "daring." It is not a book of precepts; it is a book of examples. It is not Christianity or the higher and perfect state of the Christian life in the abstract; it is all this, but in the concrete. It is not a treatise on ascetic theology; it is a record of the practice of ascetic theology, both in the cloister and in the world. It does not tell us what *ought* to be done; it reveals to us what *has been* done. Synthetically it shows what *can* be done. It becomes more practical still—it proves what *we* may do.

There is no reading perhaps so dry, none that

appeals with so little force even to the omnivorous reader, as the reading of sermons, even though the sermons were preached by earnest and eloquent men. In the average library, sermon books remain uncut or are relegated to the highest shelves. Who reads the sermons of Saint Thomas, Saint Bernard, Saint Augustine, for reading's sake? Who even—unless he be a preacher—is interested in Bossuet's once impassioned, now passionless, once eloquent, but now fireless discourses, or in the Conferences of Lacordaire? On the other hand, as the statistics of librarians will reveal, few books are more in request than books of biography. Biographical reading is almost invariably interesting, fascinating even, and absorbing sometimes, although the subject of the biography may not have been fascinating or absorbing in himself. Carlyle had experienced this when he wrote: "Biography is the most universally pleasant, the most universally profitable of all reading." The books in a popular lending library which are on the lower shelves within easy reach, which are dog-eared and thumb-marked, are those which do not report words, but which recount deeds, which reproduce the living life of the living or the dead. The reason of this choice of books is simple. The printed sermon lacks life, the soul has gone from the words—it passed away with the sound of the preacher's living voice. The sermon in the book is dead, and the book is its grave. The same in its degree may be said of a book of speeches. "Oh, that my enemy would write a book," especially if it be a book of his sermons, or even of his eloquent speeches! Biography is not a record of words that are lifeless; it is life re-lived in the imagination and mind of the reader. He whose life is read, "although he be dead, yet speaketh." The work of the biographer is akin to the art of the painter. The well-written biography,

like a skilfully limned picture, opens the closed tomb, takes the dead by the hand, and makes him alive again. We see him, we hear him, we are almost sensible of his presence. Even in reading a readable novel, although we are assured by the author that the characters have no existence in real life, but are purely imaginary creations, they *seem* to live in our lives and form part of our living surroundings. We are interested in them, in their sayings and their doings, even as though we heard and saw them. When the novel is finished, we are loth to part with them; it is like saying "Good-bye" to old friends. Much more is this true of those who are not creatures of the writer's imagination, but who once really lived as we now live, and in whose lives we have a practical interest. More especially, again, is this true if they whose lives are portrayed followed in their day the mode of life which we are following in ours, if they observed the Rule of which we make profession, if they were guided by the principles which guide us, and if they even wore the very dress which we are wearing as a symbol and a sign of the life, the principles, and the profession common to them and to ourselves.

Hagiology is an apostolate. The hagiologist is an apostle. "Remember the days of old; think upon every generation; ask thy father and he will declare to thee, thy elders and they will tell thee" (Deut. xxii. 17). The biographer recalls the days of old; he makes past generations, which are dead and buried, live again; he bids our fathers who have gone "declare" to us who remain; and under the potent spell of his facile pen our elders are constrained to tell us what was thought and said and done in the days whose night has now come. Hagiographers are the biographers of saints. Hagiology brings saints' lives within measurable distance of our own, and inspires

them to preach to us by the irresistible eloquence of example. A sermon is Christianity in theory, a saint's life is Christianity in practice. Practical men—and we are all practical men in these practical days—are affected more by the concrete than by the abstract gospel of truth. "An ounce of practice is worth a pound of preaching" is a proverb none the less true for being old. Every preacher knows, that, if his audience is getting restless, an anecdote from real life will recall their attention. "I remember," or "a few years ago," or "as I was coming to this church to-night, I met a young man," will command—yes, *command*—the ears and minds and rivet the attention, not only of children, but of "those grown old or who are growing old," when what is called "eloquence" will fail. It is the eloquence of living example which appeals to living men. The wise old Seneca said and wrote many a wise word, but none wiser than this, "Men believe their eyes rather than their ears." They are moved by deeds, whereas words, like a butterfly's wing, touch them in passing, but leave neither mark nor impression. Saint Augustine has the same idea, but he expresses it in a still more forcible way: "*Vox verbi sonat; vox exempli tonat,*" which we may freely translate, "You *may* hear the word formed by the voice; you *must* hear the voice of the life;" or, literally, "The voice of a word sounds; the voice of example THUNDERS."

Saint Augustine was converted by "the voice of example." He tells us in the Eighth Book of his Confessions that "in the great contention of (his) inward dwelling" he turned to his friend Alypius and exclaimed: "What ails us? . . . The unlearned start up and take heaven by force, whilst we, with our learning and without heart, lo! where we wallow in flesh and blood! Are we ashamed to follow

67 because others are gone before, and not ashamed not to follow?" The future Saint gives us the answer before the end of the book. "Instantly . . . by a light of serenity, as it were, infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away." The opening of the next chapter or book of Confessions epitomizes his future life: "O Lord, I am Thy servant. I am Thy servant, and the son of Thy handmaid. Thou hast broken my bonds asunder. I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of praise." The two courtiers, the history of whose conversion led up to Saint Augustine's own consecration to God's service, were won to God by the chance reading in a little book the Life of Saint Anthony.

Biography was the apostolate to which the Church is indebted for the change wrought in the worldly spirit of Ignatius of Loyola, and for the miracle of grace which made him a valiant champion of justice and truth. "A book of the Lives of our Saviour and the Saints was brought him. He read them at first only to pass away the time." He "admired their love of solitude and of the Cross." Then came "the firm resolution to imitate the Saints." Finally, he himself became a saint, a warrior-saint in the army of the Lord, and the captain of a company of saints whose name is "legion." In reading the life-stories of God's servants, we are not merely listening to the words of holy men; we are watching their actions, and so we are awakened from our sleep by the "thunder" of their example. It has been said, "Men will wrangle for religion, write for it, fight for it, die for it—anything but live for it." In Christian biography we have the convincing evidence of those who *lived* for religion.

This is the testimony of the pages which follow these words. The writer of these pages, the painter of

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these word-pictures, in presenting to us the words and ways of the saintly children of Saint Dominic, has given us all something to think about; more than that—something to do, viz., to realize in our own lives the ideals portrayed in the Saints' lives. Saint Augustine reminds us that it is an easy and simple thing to honour a martyr, but that it is a greater and better thing to imitate his faith and his patience. Saint John Chrysostom goes beyond this, and tells us that one who is edified by the meritorious life of a saint ought to take delight in following him in his service of God, and that, to be consistent, if he will not imitate the saint's life, he ought not to praise it. In looking through the Lives—almost a hundred in number—briefly and yet pithily recorded in this volume, is there not one, gentle reader, which comes home to you? Is there none that appeals to you? Not one which seems to have been what your life might be, ought to be, may be—shall I add, will be?

In a palace at Wurzburg there is a room lined with mirrors. Wherever you look, you see yourself reflected in the clear crystal. In this Dominican album which you hold in your hand there is a series of pictures which are at the same time mirrors. Is there not one in which you may see yourself reflected?—not perhaps as you are, but what you once were; what you have fallen from; what you may rise to; what you may be again? There are mirror-pictures for all—for young, for aged, for those in middle life; for the priest and for the layman; for the cloistered nun and for the lady living in the world; for the religious praying in the choir or studying in his cell, and for the man of the world in the busy marts of life; for the disciple and the professor; for the sorrowful and the glad of heart; for the learned and the unlettered; for the tepid and the fervent; for the laggard and the

sluggard, as well as for the hero and the saint. All have a place in this volume of Dominican portraits. They were not all saints always; they were not all consistently and persistently holy; but all became saints, all died saints, and all are now saints in the kingdom of saints. As we look at these pictures, the question which appealed with such unerring force to Saint Augustine appeals with equal force to us: "Canst thou not what these youths, what these maidens can? Or can they either in themselves, and not rather in the Lord their God?" (Conf. Bk. viii. n. xi.). If we cannot imitate all, we can assuredly imitate some. As we scan their faces and study their lives, we can hardly fail to find—whoever and whatever we may be—a model which we could choose as our ideal. They were all men or women, either young or older; they were all made in the same mould and of the same flesh and blood and human spirit as we; each had passions to conquer and overcome, concupiscences to master and subdue, an unbridled tongue to curb, an untamed nature to tame, bodily senses which "weighed down the soul;" each lived in a "world set in iniquity," as is our world to-day. Some were in our position of life, whatever that may be; some suffered from the very temptations which are buffeting us; some were of our age, and had a character, a temperament, like our own; some lived in our land—perhaps in our home. "*Quod isti et istæ?* Canst thou not what these youths, what these maidens can?" "Cast thyself upon Him; fear not; He will not withdraw Himself that thou shouldst fall. Cast thyself fearlessly upon Him; He will receive and heal thee." God has given us the same helps and aids which He gave to them—prayer, penance, the Sacraments, the intercession of Mary and the Saints. He only exacts of us what He exacted of them—self-denial, contempt of the world, purity

of mind, heart, and life, and union with Himself. Walking in their steps, imitating their ways, we may be as they were, and eventually as they are. *Quod isti et istæ*—we *can* do what these youths, these maidens did.

We are apt to put the Saints on pedestals, like Simeon Stylites, high up on a lofty pillar which we cannot reach, with aureolas about their heads which would not fit us, and a halo of sanctity around them which apparently would ill become us. In reading these Lives the Saints come down from their pillars; they remove the aureola and hide the halo; and they become what we are, or what we may be. How natural these pictures are, and how consolingly natural they reveal the Saints to have been, even in the midst of the supernatural lives which they led! Grace does not dethrone nature and rule in its stead; it is superadded to nature, and, without destroying nature, lifts it up, and supernaturalizes it, and refines it, and sanctifies it. God in giving grace does not annihilate His former work; He only perfects it. As a wise architect, He builds upon the foundations which He has already firmly laid. "The Son of Man came not to destroy but to save" (Luke ix. 56).; "Not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it" (Matt. v. 17). Nature and nature's laws remain; grace only perfects and exalts them. "Excelsior" is the motto of the Saint, and he rises above nature. *Sursum corda* is God's command to His servants, and their answer comes: *Habemus ad Dominum*. The heart is there; it remains a human heart with human passions, human affections, human love; but it is "lifted up to God." Throughout this book we see this exemplified almost on its every page, and we see it for our own encouragement. God works through nature; grace perfects, but does not destroy nature and nature's gifts. All that God, through grace, destroys, is sin. Saint Dominic was a

man of a deeply earnest nature; he consecrated his earnestness to God and it became zeal. Saint Thomas Aquinas would have been great and distinguished in any branch of study, in science, medicine, or law; he devoted himself to sacred lore, directed his talents to God, and so became a Saint and a Doctor of the Church. Saint Vincent Ferrer was "*orator natus*," a born orator; he remained an orator whilst becoming a Saint; and, consecrating by grace his oratorical power to God and the salvation of souls, he became an œcumenical preacher of the Divine Word and the spiritual father of Saints. Saint Antoninus might have been an eminent lawyer, great in the esteem of men; he used nature's gift for God and in the service of the Church, and became instead an eminent canonist and a chosen servant of Heaven. Saint Rose of Lima, beautiful of feature and of a refined and gentle nature, might have wedded whom she would. She did wed whom she would; she espoused Jesus Christ. Saint Catharine of Siena had a large loving heart; she might have loved creatures, or she might have been drawn by her loving heart to sin; but she gave that human heart with its human love to God, and He gave her His Heart in return. Blessed Henry Suso's history is instructive. He was human—oh! so human!—read his Life as it is written in this book and you will see what I mean; and yet he became, without ceasing to be human—shall I say it?—divine, a man of God, a mystic of mystics, the patron and pattern of ascetic Saints even to our own time.

"Every scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like to the master of a house, who bringeth forth out of his treasury new things and old" (Matt. xiii. 52). The "scribe" of this volume has had this Gospel maxim in view. It is not the Life of a Saint, but a collection of Lives of Saints; it is not a picture, but an

album of pictures ; it is not a single mirror, but a room lined with mirrors. We must all see ourselves somewhere ; we must find a picture in the album which we ought to resemble. We must all, amongst so many Lives, find one at least which may be our ideal. Saint Raymund, the aged canonist of well-nigh five score, preaches to the old. Saint Rose of Lima, dying at the age of thirty-one, and Blessed Imelda, at the age of eleven, are models for the young. The high-born and the leisured class may find a pattern in Blessed Jane of Portugal ; the lowly born and the man of toil in Blessed Albert of Bergamo. The religious woman in the cloister has only to look to the Life of Saint Catharine of Ricci and try to copy that life in her own. The woman living in the world may take Blessed Margaret of Castello as her model and her guide. The lay-brother and the lay-sister will read a lesson in the Lives of Blessed Martin Porres and Blessed James of Ulm. The religious man working for the souls of others as well as for his own may look where he will, he will find everywhere something to learn. The man in the world who wishes not to be of the world is not without his ideal layman. The chronic sufferer from ill-health will find a model of patience in Blessed Maria Bartolomea. The lawyer, much abused of men, may gaze upon the portrait of Blessed Peter di Jeremia, and see whether the picture becomes a mirror. The artist—the Catholic artist—who paints not only for gold but for God, will find encouragement in the words of Blessed Lawrence of Ripafratta to Fra Angelico and Fra Benedetto, the artist brothers, both sons of Saint Dominic, who are still Friar Preachers, preaching by their paintings with an eloquence beyond the eloquence of words. The sailor has his patron, if not his pattern, in Blessed Gonzalez, better known as Saint Telmo. To the lady of fashion the life of Blessed Villana

will appeal with greater force than the sermons of Savonarola or Segneri on the vanity of a worldly life. That least of little men, the vain and conceited man, may learn a lesson from the same Blessed Gonzalez and his fall. Even the apostate who is repentant has his patron in Blessed Anthony Neyrot, first a Dominican, then an apostate from the faith, then a convert, and finally a martyr for the faith which he had renounced. The choice is here; it is for the reader to choose; and when he has chosen, it is for him to study, to admire, and to imitate the patron and pattern of his choice.

JOHN PROCTER, O.P.

SHORT LIVES OF THE DOMINICAN SAINTS

JANUARY 10

Blessed Gonsalvo of Amarantha, Confessor

(A.D. 1187-1259)

GONSALVO or Gundisalvus was a native of Portugal, Jan. 10 and was born of noble parents about A.D. 1187. When he was carried to the font, the bystanders observed that the infant fixed his eyes on the crucifix with a look of extraordinary love. Whenever, in after life, the child was fretful or ill, if his mother showed him some holy image, it immediately soothed him and he would hold out his arms to embrace it. When he grew up, he entered the ecclesiastical state, and was given a rich benefice by the Archbishop of Braga. After discharging the duties attached to this post with the utmost fidelity for some years, Gonsalvo felt a great desire to visit the Holy Land as a pilgrim, and obtained leave to commit the care of his parish during his absence to one of his nephews.

He spent fourteen years in pilgrimage, at the end of which time he returned to Portugal and hastened to his home. To his sorrow he found that his nephew had fallen into evil ways and was leading a life of riot and dissipation. The young man had long

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Jan. 10 believed that his uncle was dead, and, not recognising him in the ragged and wayworn pilgrim who came to his gate begging for alms, he drove him away with curses and blows. Gonsalvo did not make himself known, but, retiring to a solitary place, built a little hermitage, where he led an austere life, employing himself in preaching missions in the surrounding villages.

The fame of his sanctity soon spread. Gonsalvo, however, felt that his true vocation had not yet been made manifest to him. One night, as he slept at the foot of the altar in his little hermitage, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and commanded him to enter that religious Order wherein her Office began and ended with the *Ave Maria*. On awakening, Gonsalvo could remember no Order where this custom prevailed ; but he resolved at once to set out in search of the institute to which the voice of Our Lady had called him. He passed through a great part of Spain and Portugal, visiting convent after convent, before he could find the one which he sought. Arriving at length at the newly-founded Dominican Convent of Guimares, of which Blessed Peter Gonzalez was then prior, he asked for a night's hospitality ; and, as he was retiring to rest, he heard the Brethren, according to their custom, reciting the Office of Our Lady in the Dormitory. It began with the *Ave Maria*, and Gonsalvo listened anxiously for the conclusion, in the hope that he should receive an assurance that his search had ended and that his faith and obedience were about to be rewarded. His ear soon caught the welcome sound of the Angelic Salutation, repeated at the close also of the Office, and he at once begged for the habit and was admitted into the Order.

After his profession, he was allowed to return with a companion to his old hermitage at Amarantha, whence he went forth, as before, to preach in the surrounding

towns and villages. He built a bridge, partly with his own hands, over the river Tamaga, which flowed near his hermitage. Many persons had lost their lives in attempting to ford this river; Gonsalvo therefore undertook the difficult task of constructing the bridge purely as a work of charity. God marked His approval of His servant's labours by many miracles. On one occasion, provisions failing him and the peasants who worked with him, Gonsalvo went to the river-side and made the sign of the Cross; after which he called the fishes to him and a great number obeyed his voice. Coming to the shore and leaping about, as if to show their goodwill, they suffered him to take them alive with his hands; and, when he had secured as many as he required, he dismissed the others with his blessing. Jan. 10

On another occasion, when he was preaching to the people, desiring to make them understand the effect of the Church's censures upon the soul, he excommunicated a basket of bread and the loaves at once became black and corrupt. Then, to show that the Church can restore to her communion those who humbly acknowledge their fault, he removed the excommunication and the loaves recovered their whiteness and their wholesome savour.

Gonsalvo died A.D. 1259. Many miracles were worked through his intercession. In the year 1400, during a terrible inundation of the Tamaga, he was seen turning aside some oak trees which, borne along by the raging stream, threatened the destruction of his bridge. In the year 1540, his chapel and hermitage came into the possession of the Order. Pope Pius IV. gave permission for the Mass and Office of Blessed Gonsalvo to be celebrated in all the territories dependent on the crown of Portugal, a privilege which was afterwards extended by Clement X. to the entire Dominican Order.

Prayer

Jan. 10 O God, who didst wonderfully enkindle in the mind of the Blessed Confessor Gonsalvo the love of Thy holy name, grant, we beseech Thee, that, following closely in his footsteps, we may ever think of Thee and may with ardent desire do the things which are pleasing to Thee. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

JANUARY 16

Blessed Stephana Quinzani, Virgin

(A.D. 1457-1530)

Jan. 16 STEPHANA QUINZANI was born A.D. 1457, at a little village in the neighbourhood of Brescia in Italy. Her parents were of the middle class in life and were both of them fervent in the practice of their religious duties. From her earliest childhood little Stephana continually heard an interior voice repeating to her the words, "Charity, charity, charity!" When only five years old she consecrated herself to God with her whole heart, and at the age of seven she made the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, adding a promise to assume later on the habit of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, to which her father belonged. Our Lord then appeared to her, accompanied by His Blessed Mother, Saint Dominic, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Saint Catharine of Siena, and espoused her to Himself, bestowing on her a magnificent ring, which was seen by many persons.

About this time, the Quinzani family removed to Soncino and Stephana placed herself under the spiritual direction of Blessed Matthew Carreri of the

Order of Saint Dominic, who one day told her that at his death he should make her his heiress. The child did not then understand the meaning of these words, but, when the servant of God departed this life, she felt her heart painfully and mysteriously wounded, and at the same time Blessed Matthew appeared to her and explained that this was the inheritance he had promised to her. Jan. 16

When about twelve years old, she went to hear a sermon on the Feast of Saint Andrew. That great Apostle appeared to her in vision, holding in his hands a large cross, and addressed her in the following words: "Behold, my daughter, the way to heaven. Love God, fear God, honour God; flee from the world and embrace the Cross." Love of the Cross became thenceforth her characteristic virtue, so that it was said of her that there were but two things for which she bore an affection, namely, Holy Communion and sufferings. In all her visions the Cross bore a remarkable part, and she gave herself up, not only to the practice of the severest austerities, but to an almost uninterrupted meditation on the Passion of her Divine Spouse. She was even permitted in some degree to undergo His sufferings in her own person, participating on Fridays in a mysterious manner in our Lord's agony and sweat of blood, His scourging at the pillar, His crowning with thorns, and His crucifixion. Her confessor, who wrote her life, testified to having seen the sacred stigmata on her hands and feet, and the marks of the crown of thorns upon her head.

In one of her raptures she was given to understand that all the angels and saints together, including even Our Blessed Lady herself, are unable to love God as much as He deserves to be loved. Then an abyss of love opened before her eyes, and she cried out,

Jan. 16 "O my Lord and Redeemer, grant me the grace to love all this love ; otherwise I care not to live." But Our Lord smiled upon her and told her that her wish was an impossible one, as her finite will could not embrace that abyss of infinite love. Nevertheless, to comfort her, He said that He would accept her goodwill, as though she really loved to the extent to which she desired, adding, "Think not that this great abyss of love remains unloved ; for, if creatures cannot love it, it is loved by Me, who am infinite good."

When, for the love of God, Blessed Stephana had made an entire renunciation of her own will in the hands of her Confessor, Our Lord appeared to her and said, "My daughter, since for the love of Me thou hast generously stripped thyself of thine own will, ask what thou wilt and I will grant it to thee." The Holy Virgin replied almost in the words used by Saint Thomas Aquinas under similar circumstances — "I desire nothing but Thyself, O Lord."

At the age of fifteen Stephana received the habit of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, from which time she devoted herself to the care of the sick and poor in the hospitals and to every kind of active charity. Our Lord was pleased to work many miracles by her hands, multiplying food and money and restoring the sick to health. Her reputation for sanctity extended far and wide. The Republic of Venice and the Duke of Mantua pressed her to come and found Convents in their territories ; but she refused, in the hope of being able to establish one in Soncino. This she was at length able to accomplish, placing it under the invocation of Saint Paul the Apostle and peopling it with a fervent Community of thirty, whom she had carefully trained to the practices of the religious life. In consequence of the war between France and Venice the nuns were obliged, after a time, to withdraw from

their Convent and take shelter within the walls of Jan. 16
the town.

It was during this interval that Blessed Stephana passed to her reward on 2nd January, A.D. 1530, at the age of seventy-three. She was laid to rest in the church attached to her Convent, to which her Community was afterwards able to return. It is, however, now suppressed, but Blessed Stephana is still held in great veneration by the people of Soncino. She was beatified by Pope Benedict XIV. in the year 1740.

Prayer

O God, who didst enkindle Blessed Stephana, Thy Virgin, with the love of the Crucified, and didst in a wonderful manner render her a sharer in His Passion, grant, we beseech Thee, that by her intercession and example, we may deserve to be made conformable to the image of Thy Son. Through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY 19

Blessed Andrew of Peschiera, Confessor

(Died A.D. 1485)

ANDREW GREGO was born at the beginning of the Jan. 19
fifteenth century at Peschiera, a small town in the diocese of Verona, on the shores of Lake Garda in the north of Italy. Even in childhood he was remarkable for his prayer and abstinence and he always fasted during the whole of Lent on bread and water. He was equally admirable for his charity to the poor and his perfect obedience to his father. Finding it impossible to carry out his ardent wish to retire to some hermitage, he lived a mortified and religious life at

Jan. 19 home. His brothers, however, conceived a strange hatred for him, and, as soon as their father was dead, they began to persecute and ill-treat him. He bore all their injuries with unalterable patience until the day he resolved to enter the cloister. On this occasion they accompanied him to the gates of the town, and Andrew, before taking leave of them, knelt down and humbly kissed their feet. The only property he had taken with him out of his father's house was a stick, which he now returned to his brothers, declaring them heirs to everything over which he had any claim, and begging them to keep the stick in memory of him and never to give it away. It was laid aside in a corner of the house, where, on occasion of his holy death, some years afterwards, it miraculously flowered, and many prodigies were worked by its instrumentality.

Blessed Andrew received the Dominican habit in the Convent of Brescia, and was thence sent to Saint Mark's at Florence. Trained to the exercises of the religious life by Blessed Anthony della Chiesa, he soon became distinguished for perfection in every virtue. His life was one of incessant apostolic labour amongst the Alpine regions of Northern Italy. These districts were at that time infested by heretics who had revived the errors of the Manichees, and Blessed Andrew, by his zeal and by the great number of souls whom he converted, gained for himself the title of "the Apostle of the Valteline," *i.e.* the valley watered by the river Adda.

On one occasion, when he was disputing with the heretics, they produced a large volume full of blasphemous errors against the Catholic devotion to the Saints. Blessed Andrew bade them open the book and see what it contained. They did so, and there issued forth an enormous viper, as though to bear wit-

ness to the venomous poison found in those heretical Jan. 19 pages.

He had a most tender devotion to the Passion of our Lord, and in all the ancient pictures of him he is represented with a crucifix. In the chapel dedicated to him at Peschiera he is depicted standing near a crucifix, whence there issues a ray of light which pierces his heart. This is believed to refer to some miraculous favour received by Blessed Andrew whilst contemplating the sufferings of Our Lord. On Fridays he was always accustomed to wear a crown of sharp thorns, which he dexterously concealed under his hood.

Besides founding many orphanages and refuges for the destitute, Blessed Andrew caused several churches and monasteries to be erected and the number of parishes to be increased in the wild regions which were the scene of his labours. In particular, he procured the foundation of the celebrated Convent of Morbegno to serve as a rampart against heresy and vice; and thither he was wont to retire from time to time in the intervals of his apostolate to refresh his spirit by the exercises of prayer and contemplation. Such was his humility that he would accept of no post of dignity amongst his brethren, exercising only the humble office of going out begging for the support of the Community.

In his apostolic work for souls, which he carried on to an extreme old age, he fearlessly braved the dangers of glaciers, avalanches, and precipices; nothing ever daunted his courage. His penance was rugged and severe. His love of poverty was a passion. He laboured among the poor; his food was the common fare of the needy, chestnuts, barley bread, and water. He was called the "Father of the poor."

Blessed Andrew closed his saintly life by a holy

Jan. 19 death in the midst of his brethren at Morbegno in the year 1485. His remains have twice been solemnly translated. He was beatified by Pius VII., A.D. 1820.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst adorn Blessed Andrew, Thy Confessor, with the apostolic spirit, grant us, in imitation of him, so to benefit others, both by word and example, as to reap abundant fruit. Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

JANUARY 23

Saint Raymund of Pennafort, Confessor

(A.D. 1175-1275)

Jan. 23 THIS great Saint was born in Spain, at the castle of Pennafort, six leagues distant from Barcelona, A.D. 1175. He belonged to a noble family, allied to the former Counts of Barcelona and to the kings of Aragon. Entering the ecclesiastical state, he left his native land to go and study at the celebrated University of Bologna. Having taken his doctor's degree in civil and canon law, he began to teach with great applause in that city. After some time, the Bishop of Barcelona persuaded him to return to Spain, and made him one of the canons of his cathedral. But Raymund thirsted after a closer union with God, and on Good Friday, A.D. 1222, at the age of forty-seven, he begged to be admitted into the Order of Saint Dominic. It is said that he was moved to take this step partly by remorse for having once dissuaded a young man, who consulted him, from joining a religious Order.

From this time he increased in holiness of life, and was the means of leading very many to leave the

world and take the Dominican habit. He became Confessor to King James of Aragon, and was greatly distinguished for his skill in settling cases of conscience. At the command of his superiors, he drew up a book on this subject, which was the first ever written of the kind. It bears his name, "Raimundina." Jan. 23

The Moors were at this time exercising great cruelties upon their Christian captives in Spain. On the night of the 1st of August, A.D. 1223, as Raymund was praying for these unhappy prisoners, our Lady appeared to him and told him that it was her will that a religious Order should be founded for their relief. On the same night, the Queen of Heaven made a similar revelation to King James of Aragon and to Saint Peter Nolasco, a penitent of Saint Raymund's, who for some years had devoted himself to this work of charity, and who was destined to be the founder of the new Order of Our Lady of Mercy for the redemption of captives. Its statutes were drawn up by Saint Raymund, who with his own hands gave the habit to Saint Peter Nolasco. It resembled exactly that of the Order to which he himself belonged, save that the mantle was white and the scapular emblazoned with the royal arms of Aragon.

Saint Raymund was now summoned to Rome by Gregory IX., where he became Confessor to the Holy Father and Grand Penitentiary. In obedience to the Pope's command, he collected all the Decretals, *i.e.* the decrees and replies of the Sovereign Pontiffs to questions which had been submitted to the Holy See, and he added explanations to those the meaning of which seemed obscure. He accomplished this gigantic task in the short space of three years. The Pope twice named him to an Archbishopric, but the Saint each time succeeded in obtaining his release from an honour which would have been painful to his humility.

Jan. 23 After the lamented death of Blessed Jordan, the first successor of Saint Dominic, Saint Raymund was elected Master-General of the Order by the Chapter of Bologna, A.D. 1238. During the two years of his government, the Saint made some admirable regulations, and divided the Constitutions into two parts, the first relating to the religious life of the Brethren and the second to their external life, their duties, and offices. At the General Chapter of A.D. 1240, he prevailed on the electors to accept his resignation on the plea of ill-health and infirmity ; but so great was the grief of the entire Order at losing their saintly superior, that a subsequent General Chapter inflicted severe penances and absolution from office on all those who had accepted this resignation.

The Saint lived thirty-five years after he had given up office, leading a most saintly existence in his convent at Barcelona. Almost every night his guardian angel awoke him before Matins and summoned him to prayer. He laboured incessantly to procure the conversion of the Moors, as well as of Jews and heretics, and it was at his request that Saint Thomas Aquinas composed his *Summa contra Gentiles*. He accompanied King James of Aragon in his expedition to the island of Majorca and boldly rebuked him for giving public scandal. Finding his remonstrances of no effect, the Saint prepared to return to his Convent at Barcelona. The King endeavoured to retain him on the island by force ; but Saint Raymund, in presence of a multitude of spectators, threw his mantle on the sea, fastened the end of it to his staff, which served as a mast, and kneeling upon it, as if in a boat, he crossed in this way to the mainland, accomplishing the passage, a distance of about a hundred miles, in six hours. On reaching Barcelona, he quietly took up his mantle, which was perfectly dry, and returned to his Convent.

The doors were closed, as it was the hour of the mid-day *siesta*, but the Saint found himself miraculously transported within the walls and thus escaped from the acclamations of the admiring crowd who had witnessed his landing. The King was so touched by the miracle that he renounced his evil courses and thenceforth led a good life. Jan. 23

Saint Raymund was universally regarded as the greatest ecclesiastic of his time. At length, worn out by age, infirmities, and penances, he happily departed to our Lord on the Feast of the Epiphany, A.D. 1275, being in his hundredth year. Numerous prodigies were worked at his tomb, whence issued a miraculous dust which restored health to many persons. He was beatified by Pope Paul V., and canonized by Pope Clement VIII., A.D. 1601.

Prayer

O God, who didst choose Blessed Raymund to be a glorious minister of the Sacrament of Penance and didst lead him in a wonderful manner across the waves of the sea, grant that, by his intercession, we may bring forth worthy fruits of penance, and may succeed in reaching the haven of eternal salvation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY 24

Blessed Marcolino of Forlì, Confessor

(A.D. 1317-1397)

BLESSED MARCOLINO AMANNI was born at the little town of Forlì in Italy, A.D. 1317. He was not gifted with great talents, but from his earliest years was remarkable for his holiness of life. At the age of ten he Jan. 24

Jan. 24 abandoned the world and consecrated himself to God in the Dominican Order. He was so great a lover of solitude that he never left his cell or the Convent without necessity. He led a most penitential life and one of almost uninterrupted prayer; he spoke but little and was always attentive to the wants of his Brethren and ready to render them any service in his power. Humility and simplicity were his characteristic virtues, and he strove to conceal the supernatural favours granted him by God. His devotion in celebrating Mass was very great; he often went into an ecstasy whilst offering the Holy Sacrifice. Some, who treated this holy and simple man with contempt, used to say that he went to sleep at those times; hence he was closely watched, and the supernatural character of these ecstasies was clearly manifested.

He always sought to take the lowest place, and, unless prevented, would not take his meals in the refectory, but in the kitchen with the servants. He ever loved the company of children and was a favourite with them from his gentle and winning ways. He bore a tender devotion to our Blessed Lady, and a statue of her, which he had in his cell, is said to have spoken to him several times. In consequence of his fervour and exact observance of the rule, he was employed by Blessed Raymund of Capua in the reform of the Order after the ravages of the Black Death, and he succeeded in re-establishing regular discipline in several Convents.

He died at the age of eighty, A.D. 1397. Scarcely had he breathed his last when an unknown child of entrancing beauty, supposed to have been an angel, was seen hurrying through the streets, exclaiming, "Hasten to the Convent of the Friars Preachers; the Blessed Father Marcolino is just dead." The people, obeying the summons, flocked to the Convent and

their faith and devotion were rewarded by many miracles. Blessed Marcolino was beatified by Benedict XIV., A.D. 1750. Jan. 24

Prayer

O God, who art ever pleased by the prayer of the meek and humble, grant us so to profit by the prayers and example of Blessed Marcolino, that, becoming truly meek and humble, we may more easily obtain Thy gifts. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JANUARY 26

Blessed Margaret of Hungary, Virgin

(A.D. 1242-1270)

IN the year 1242, Hungary was governed by a devout king, Bela IV. His territories were overrun by hordes of Tartars, whose sacrileges and cruelties filled the entire kingdom with scenes of bloodshed and violence. In their distress, Bela and his Queen vowed to dedicate their first daughter to the service of God, if He would grant them victory over their enemies. Then, full of trust in the Divine goodness, Bela led his little army against the Tartars, who were utterly defeated and driven from the country. Margaret's birth occurred shortly afterwards, and in consequence of her parents' vow she was taken to the Dominican Convent of Vesprim when only three years old. Even at that tender age she showed extraordinary signs of devotion. In less than six months she knew the Office of Our Lady by heart, merely from hearing the Sisters recite it. She was clothed in the religious habit on her fourth birthday, on which occasion she was shown a crucifix, and she asked for some explanation of the Jan. 26

Jan. 26 sacred symbol. On hearing that it represented Jesus Christ, who shed His blood for us even to the last drop, she immediately covered it with kisses, exclaiming, "Lord, I give and abandon myself to Thee for ever." Her parents built a magnificent monastery for her in an island of the Danube, about a mile from Buda, and hither she removed with several other Sisters when she had attained the age of ten. When she was twelve years old, she made her solemn profession in the hands of Blessed Humbert, the General of the Order. Her parents afterwards obtained a Papal dispensation in order to marry her to the King of Bohemia, but this only gave Margaret an opportunity of showing that her religious life was the result of her own free choice, for no prayers or entreaties would induce her to quit the cloister. In order to protect herself from further annoyances of this kind, she was solemnly veiled and consecrated to God according to the rite given in the Roman Pontifical, in presence of the Archbishop of Strigonia and a number of other prelates. This ceremony took place at the altar of her aunt, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary.

Blessed Margaret looked upon herself as the vilest person in the Convent and rendered the most menial services, not only to her Sisters, but even to the servants. It was her delight to wash the dishes, sweep the house, and discharge the lowliest domestic duties. She had a tender love for the poor and wept when she had no alms to bestow on them. But it was above all upon her sick Sisters that she poured forth the treasures of her charity, claiming it as her right to render them all the most loathsome and repulsive services which their condition might require.

Her life was one of continual prayer and hard labour and she practised the most austere penance. Her tender love for her Divine Spouse made her hunger

after a share in His sufferings and humiliations, and she often compelled her companions to scourge her with pitiless severity. Her habit was worn out at the knees and elbows by her continual genuflexions and prostrations. She thirsted for martyrdom, and, on hearing a rumour that the Tartars were about to invade Hungary, she exclaimed, "I pray God that my father's kingdom may be spared so terrible a scourge ; nevertheless, if they are to come, I trust they will come here, that we may receive our crown at their hands." Her love for our Blessed Lady was so great, that, at the mere sound of the name of Mary, she would fall upon her knees and bow her head to the dust, to do honour to her whom she delighted in saluting as "the Mother of God and my hope."

Blessed Margaret died at the early age of twenty-eight. Almost innumerable miracles have been worked through her intercession. Petitions were repeatedly presented to the Holy See for her beatification ; and Pius VII. extended to the Order of St. Dominic the permission to celebrate her festival, which was already kept in many churches.

Prayer

O God, the rewarder of faithful souls, who didst enrich Thy holy Virgin, the Blessed Margaret, with spiritual gifts and eternal joys for her perfect renunciation and constant mortification, grant that we, through her prayers and example, may destroy the vices of the flesh, despise all earthly things, and so attain to everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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JANUARY 28

**Translation of the Relics of Saint Thomas
Aquinas, Confessor and Doctor
of the Church**

Jan. 28 THE great luminary of the Church, Saint Thomas Aquinas, departed this life at the Benedictine Abbey of Fossa Nuova, when on his way to the General Council of Lyons, and his sacred remains were interred there until such time as the Master-General of the Dominicans should determine to what Convent they were to be removed. The Benedictines were resolved not to part with the treasure; hence they secretly removed the body by night from the cloister where it had been buried and laid it in the Chapel of Saint Stephen. But the Holy Doctor would not suffer that those who came from all parts to implore his intercession should offer their supplications at an empty tomb. He therefore appeared to the Abbot, reproved him severely for what he had done, and threatened him with chastisement if his remains were not restored to their first resting-place. The Abbot obeyed, and, taking a few of the monks into his confidence, proceeded with the utmost secrecy to a fresh translation of the body. But the moment the tomb was opened there issued forth a most sweet odour, which spread itself throughout the Convent and brought the entire community to the church to ascertain whence it came. The body was found to be in a state of perfect preservation, both on this occasion and at another translation seven years later, when it was laid in a marble tomb by the side of the high altar.

Fourteen years after the death of the Saint the

monks gave his right hand to his sister, the Countess of San Severino, and this precious relic became, later on, the property of the Dominican Convent at Salerno, where it is still preserved incorrupt. The monks then presented the head of Saint Thomas to the Count of Piperno, and in the year 1349, hearing that a celebrated bandit had formed the sacrilegious project of stealing and selling the body of the Saint, they entrusted the remainder of the sacred relics to the keeping of the Count of Fondi. After some time Saint Thomas appeared to this nobleman and threatened him with the vengeance of God if he did not give up his body to the Brethren of his own Order. This was accordingly done; but the monks of Fossa Nuova were by no means prepared to relinquish their claim to the possession of the sacred relics. They carried their complaints before Pope Urban V., himself a member of the Benedictine Order. His Holiness testified extreme displeasure at what had been done, and commanded the Master-General of the Dominican Order to restore the body of Saint Thomas to the monks of Fossa Nuova. In vain did the Master-General represent the earnest desire of the Dominican Order to possess the relics of the greatest of its sons: Urban was inexorable. A few days later, on the Festival of Corpus Christi, the General ventured to renew his entreaties. Reminding his Holiness that the Church was indebted to Saint Thomas for the beautiful Office recited on that feast, he begged that his relics might rest amongst his own Brethren, who would show them more honour than any one else.

The Pope hesitated for a few moments; then in the most solemn manner he gave judgment in the following terms: "By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and ours, we give and grant the body of the Blessed

Jan. 26

Jan. 28 Thomas of Aquin, professed religious of the Order of Preachers, to you, the Master-General, and to the said Order, to be kept either at Toulouse or at Paris, as shall seem good to the next General Chapter and to the Master-General of the Order; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And all the bystanders answered, "Amen." On the following day, however, the Pope decided the question in favour of Toulouse, where he had himself founded a university.

In virtue of this permission, the holy body was brought from Fondi and the head from Piperno, and thence both were conveyed with the utmost caution to France. The journey from Gaeta to Prouille, where the holy body was first deposited, occupied two months, and many miracles took place on the way. "It was evident," says an old chronicler, "that Saint Thomas went where it pleased him." After remaining for a month at Prouille the precious remains were brought to the Convent of the Order of Saint Dominic at Toulouse on January 28, A.D. 1369, more than 50,000 persons coming out to meet them, bearing lighted tapers, whilst 10,000 carried large torches round the bier. The canopy over the relics was borne by the Duke of Anjou, brother to the King of France, and by other persons of the highest rank. In that same year an arm of the Holy Doctor was detached from the body, and deposited with great solemnity in the Dominican Church of Saint James in Paris, where the Saint had taught with so much applause; and, a few years later, another considerable relic was given to his beloved Convent of Saint Dominic at Naples.

Thus the remains of the Angelic Doctor at length reposed in peace, according to his desire, in the midst of his Brethren, until the evil days of the French Revolution, when the Dominicans were driven from their

Convent of Toulouse. The sacred remains were then transferred for greater safety to the crypt of the Church of Saint Sernin, where sacrilegious hands were soon laid on the costly reliquaries wherein they were contained. During the present century the relics of the Holy Doctor have undergone several translations into more suitable reliquaries and to more honourable places in the same Church. At the translation in the year 1852, the sermon was preached by Père Henri-Dominique Lacordaire, the restorer of the Dominican Order in France; and in the last, which took place in the year 1878, the Archbishop of Toulouse was assisted by the Vicar-General of the Order, the Most Rev. Father Sanvito. Jan. 28

This day is regarded as the special festival of the Confraternity of the Angelic Warfare or Girdle of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Prayer

O God, who makest Thy Church glorious through the wonderful learning of Blessed Thomas, Thy Confessor and Doctor, and renderest it fruitful by his holy actions, grant us, we beseech Thee, clearly to understand his teachings and faithfully to imitate his example. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY 9

Blessed Bernard Scammacca, Confessor

(Died A.D. 1486)

BERNARD SCAMMACCA was born of a noble family at Catania in Sicily. His youth was spent in sinful disorders, but a wound which he received in one of his legs proved the means of his conversion. During Feb. 9

Feb. 9 his long hours of suffering and sleeplessness he entered into himself, realised the perilous condition of his soul, and resolved to renounce his evil ways. On his recovery, he asked and received the Dominican habit in the Convent of Catania, and henceforth devoted himself to a life of prayer and penance. He was distinguished for his obedience and humility, and for his gift of contemplation. When he retired into the garden to pray, as he was fond of doing, the little birds would come and perch on his head and outstretched arms, and there sing sweetly, filling him with the thought of the celestial harmonies; nor would they depart until they had received his blessing.

He was favoured with the gift of prophecy, and many prodigies showed how dear to God was this humble and penitent soul. Once he was found raised in the air in ecstasy before a crucifix. On another occasion the porter knocked loudly at the door of his cell to summon him to some ministry of charity. Receiving no answer, he was about to repeat the summons, when he saw a brilliant light issuing through a chink in the door, and, looking through the keyhole, he beheld the holy man in rapture, and by his side a child of heavenly beauty, bearing a lighted torch which filled the cell with a brilliant light.

Blessed Bernard devoted himself with generous ardour to the relief of the bodily and spiritual needs of his neighbours. Whilst preaching to others he failed not to expiate the sins of his youth by the practice of severe austerities. He died A.D. 1486. Fifteen years later he appeared to the Prior of the Convent, and bade him remove his remains to a more honourable resting-place. This was accordingly done, and the body was found incorrupt. During the whole of the ceremony the church-bells, untouched by mortal hands, rang out with heavenly melody. Mira-

cles of all kinds were worked at Blessed Bernard's tomb. A nobleman who had been cured through his intercession resolved to remove the sacred remains to his castle, and came by night to the Convent with a troop of armed men to carry out his design. But the servant of God would not allow his body to be removed from the Convent where he had lived and died. Appearing in the dormitory, he knocked at every door, telling the Friars that violent hands were being laid on his body in the church; and as they delayed obeying his summons, which they thought to be only a dream, he began to ring the great bell. Then the Brethren hurried to the church, where they found the tomb empty, and the sacred body lying at the door, surrounded by armed men who were vainly endeavouring to raise it from the ground. It had miraculously become so heavy that the robbers were unable to move it. They took to flight at the approach of the Friars, who had not the slightest difficulty in restoring the precious remains to their resting-place.

Blessed Bernard, having always received great veneration in Sicily, was finally beatified by Leo XII., A.D. 1825.

Prayer

O God, who didst bring back Blessed Bernard from the vices of the world, and didst lead him into the way of perfection, grant, through his merits and intercession, that we likewise may bewail our sins and may be converted with pure minds to Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY 12

Blessed Reginald of Orleans, Confessor

(Died A.D. 1220)

Feb. 12 REGINALD was born at Saint-Gilles in the south of France and had taught Canon Law with applause in the University of Paris before being raised to the dignity of Dean of the Chapter of Orleans. Coming to Rome in company with his Bishop in the beginning of the year 1218, with the intention of visiting the tombs of the Apostles before going on pilgrimage to the holy places of Jerusalem, he there became acquainted with our Holy Father, Saint Dominic. To him he opened his whole heart, telling him that he greatly desired to quit all things in order to go about preaching Jesus Christ in a state of voluntary poverty. The holy patriarch joyfully promised to receive him into the Order. Shortly after, Reginald was taken dangerously ill, and the Blessed Dominic, as he himself related to the Brethren, earnestly implored God that He would not take from him a son as yet hardly born, but that He would at least prolong his life, if it were but for a little while. And even whilst he yet prayed, the Blessed Virgin Mary, accompanied by the virgin martyrs, Saint Cecilia and Saint Catharine, appeared to Master Reginald, and, extending her virginal hand, anointed his eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, and feet, pronouncing certain words appropriate to each anointing. Then she showed him the habit of the Friars Preachers, saying to him, "Behold the habit of thy Order," and so she disappeared from his eyes, and Reginald perceived that he was cured. He related all that had passed to his

Holy Father, praying him, however, to keep the circumstances secret till after his death. Saint Dominic complied with his request ; and, in announcing to his Brethren that the linen surplice of the Canons Regular was to be exchanged for the woollen scapular, which was the particular part of the habit which the Blessed Virgin had been seen holding in her hands, he did not make known the reason of the change until after Reginald's death. This beautiful story is commemorated in the ceremony of clothing, in the words which accompany the giving of the scapular, "Receive the holy scapular of our Order, the most distinguished part of the Dominican habit, the maternal pledge from heaven of the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary towards us." Feb. 12

The remaining events of Blessed Reginald's brief but brilliant career must be summed up in a few words. After his clothing, he departed for the Holy Land, and on his return, after founding a Convent in Sicily, he ruled the Order as Vicar whilst Saint Dominic visited Spain. At the same time he assumed the government of the Convent of Bologna, where, within six months, he received more than a hundred members into the Order, many of them men of great learning and distinction ; so that it came to be a common saying that it was scarce safe to go and hear Master Reginald if you did not wish to take the Friars' habit. The great talents and success of Blessed Reginald induced Saint Dominic to remove him to Paris, to the great sorrow of his Brethren ; for, notwithstanding the severity of his discipline, they were tenderly attached to their saintly Prior and wept as though being torn from their mother's arms.

At Paris, his burning eloquence drew all to hear him and vocations to the Order were as striking as at Bologna. Being one day asked how he, who had

Feb. 12 been used to so luxurious a life in the world, had found it possible to persevere in the penitential life of the Order, Reginald humbly cast his eyes upon the ground and replied, "Truly I do not think to merit anything for that before the tribunal of God. He has given me so much consolation in my soul, that the rigours of which you speak have become very sweet and easy to me."

One of the most remarkable subjects whom he drew to the Order was Blessed Jordan of Saxony, to whom God was pleased to reveal the approaching death of Reginald in a vision, wherein he beheld a clear and sparkling fountain suddenly spring up in the Dominican Church of Saint James, and as suddenly fail.

The death of the holy man took place in February, A.D. 1220, when he had worn the habit scarcely two years. When Abbot Matthew,¹ who then governed the Community at Paris, came to announce to him that his illness was mortal and proposed to administer to him the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the dying man made answer, "I do not fear the assault of death, since the blessed hands of Mary anointed me in Rome. Nevertheless, because I would not make light of the Church's Sacrament, I will receive it, and humbly ask that it may be given to me."

Blessed Reginald has ever been held in veneration in the Order, though he was not solemnly beatified until the pontificate of Pius IX.

Prayer

O Almighty and everlasting God, who didst gift Thy Blessed Confessor Reginald with the singular protection of Thy most holy Mother, grant us, by his

¹ Matthew was the only one who ever bore the title of Abbot in the Order; the Superiors of houses have always been called Priors.

merits and prayers, to be strengthened by the perpetual succour of the same ever-glorious Virgin. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen. **Feb. 12**

FEBRUARY 13

Saint Catharine de Ricci, Virgin

(A.D. 1522-1590)

SAINT CATHARINE DE RICCI was born at Florence, **Feb. 13** A.D. 1522, and from her earliest years gave manifest proofs of her future sanctity. When only three years old she prayed with the utmost recollection, and sought out silent and solitary places wherein to devote herself to this favourite exercise. She was daily visited by her guardian angel, who instructed her in sacred mysteries, trained her to meditate upon them, and taught her the devotion of the Holy Rosary, that she might early begin to love and honour the Mother of Him whose spouse she was destined to become.

At the age of thirteen she received the habit of the Third Order of Saint Dominic in the Convent of Saint Vincent at Prato, which had been founded about thirty years previously by some disciples of the celebrated Savonarola. During her noviceship and the early years of her religious life, her continual interior conversation with the Divine Lover of her soul kept her in a state of almost constant abstraction; and as the holy maiden, in her simplicity, had never revealed, even to her Confessor, the supernatural favours which had been lavished on her from infancy, the Community thought her stupid and incapable and were very near dismissing her from the Convent. Shortly after her profession, she had several long illnesses, during which she suffered excruciating pains, and of which she was

Feb. 13 miraculously cured by repeated apparitions of Father Jerome Savonarola and his companions, or of some Saint of the Order.

In the year 1542 began those memorable ecstasies which were renewed every week for the space of twelve years, beginning at noon on Thursday and ending on Friday afternoon. During these ecstasies the closing scenes of our Lord's life were reproduced before her, and the movements of her body and the words which fell from her lips denoted the various stages of the Sacred Passion in which she was permitted thus mysteriously to take part.

On Easter Sunday of the same year, our Lord was pleased to celebrate Catharine's espousals with Himself, placing a ring on her finger with the words, "Receive, daughter, this ring as a pledge and token that thou art and ever shalt be Mine." On the following Friday the sacred stigmata were impressed on her hands, feet, and side, and from that time till her death they caused her great and continual pain. Later on, the crown of thorns was placed on her brow by her Divine Spouse, and those who nursed her in her illnesses were witnesses of another feature of resemblance to Him whom her soul loved. From her right shoulder down to her waist there was a wide, deep, livid furrow, impressed upon her by the Cross, which she bore in a mysterious manner every week with her Divine Master from the Prætorium of Pilate to the summit of Calvary.

Catharine had in her cell a large wooden crucifix to which she bore a tender devotion. Our Lord often spoke to her from this crucifix; and, on one occasion when she was praying before it, the figure detached itself from the cross and came to her. "Beloved Spouse," said Our Lord, "I come to seek in thy heart and in those of My daughters a refuge against the

crimes of sinners which overwhelm Me." Of this Feb. 13
miraculous event the whole Community were witnesses.

In the year 1552 the Saint was elected Prioress, and from that time until her death, a period of nearly forty years, she always held either that or the office of Subprioress. She set no bounds to her maternal solicitude for the well-being of those under her care. When obliged to reprove her subjects for their faults, she made a point of always, before bedtime, speaking a kind word or giving some mark of tenderness to those whom she had had occasion to correct during the day. She perfectly realized in her life that union of action and contemplation which is the spirit of the Dominican Order. Whilst attending with the utmost care and prudence to every detail of the temporal and spiritual needs of a Community of nearly a hundred and sixty nuns, and busying herself also for the salvation and perfection of many souls outside the walls of her Convent, she was all the while closely united to God and raised to the highest states of prayer. Young maidens, pious matrons, professional men, wealthy Florentine nobles, even Bishops, gloried in calling her by the name of mother; and she took a truly maternal interest in them all, as her letters amply testify. The poor were the objects of her special tenderness, and she desired that they should always be kindly received at the Convent, no matter how importunate they might be. "Manage," she would say to the portress, "that no person shall ever leave the door without being comforted and relieved in some way or other."

Saint Catharine was on terms of sweet and holy friendship with Saint Philip Neri. They earnestly wished to meet; and God, who delights in fulfilling the desires of His servants, brought them face to face in a miraculous manner, as both Saints afterwards testified.

Feb. 13 The poor souls in Purgatory often appeared to her soliciting her prayers, and she would take their sufferings upon herself to obtain their release. Often, too, she suffered as a victim of expiation for the sins of the world. Her prayer appeared to be continual. In going from one exercise to another, her lips were always in motion, reciting psalms, hymns, or rosaries ; and everything she saw seemed to raise her mind to God.

Towards the close of January, A.D. 1590, the Saint was attacked by her last illness, which was of only a few days' duration ; and, after receiving the Holy Sacraments with the utmost devotion, she happily departed to our Lord on the Feast of the Purification, whilst the angels were heard over the Convent singing harmoniously the words, " Come, O Spouse of Christ, receive the crown which the Lord hath prepared for thee from all eternity."

Many miracles were worked through her intercession. She was beatified by Clement XII., A.D. 1732, and canonized by Benedict XIV., A.D. 1746.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, who wast pleased that Thy holy Virgin, the Blessed Catharine, should be inflamed with Thy love and made illustrious through the contemplation of Thy Passion, grant to her intercession that we likewise, devoutly worshipping the mysteries of Thy Passion, may deserve to receive its fruit. Who livest and reignest, God, world without end. Amen.

FEBRUARY 14

**Blessed Nicholas Palea of
Giovinazzo, Confessor**

(A.D. 1197-1255)

THIS great servant of God was born of noble parents Feb. 14 in the year 1197, at Giovinazzo, near Bari, in the kingdom of Naples, and from his earliest childhood gave token of his future holiness.

Being sent to study at the University of Bologna, he there received the habit of the Order of Preachers from the hands of Saint Dominic himself. The Holy Patriarch conceived a singular affection for his young disciple, and often made him his companion in his apostolic journeyings. Whilst yet a novice, he was inspired to stop a poor woman in the street, in spite of the remonstrances of his companions, and, invoking the Holy Trinity, he cured her of a withered arm. This may be called a "beginning of miracles," for his subsequent labours and preachings were accompanied by continual signs and wonders.

Soon after his entrance into the Order he was sent to preach in his own country, where he founded the Convent of Trani on a site miraculously indicated by the appearance of a fiery cross. He became Provincial of the Roman Province; and, on occasion of his elevation to that dignity, he assembled the Brethren in Chapter and earnestly exhorted them to live together in the bonds of peace and fraternal charity. In order to give additional weight to his words, he related to them the following incident:—"A certain Brother," said he, "had given me trouble, and was undoubtedly in the wrong. He died a few days afterwards without

Feb. 14 having made any apology. Now, one night when I chanced to be sick and was resting a little, he appeared to me in a dream and begged my pardon. Knowing that he was dead, I said to him, 'Go, Brother, and ask pardon of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose hands thou art.' He withdrew, and as he was asking pardon of Our Lord, according to my bidding, the Divine Master said to him, 'I will not forgive thee till thou hast obtained the pardon of the Religious whom thou didst offend.' He returned the same night, and informing me of what Jesus Christ had said, he once more asked my pardon, which was readily granted him. Then he said to me, 'See, Brother Nicholas, what an evil thing it is to offend one of our Brethren, and what serious results ensue from not apologizing.'"

Blessed Nicholas discharged his duties as Provincial with the utmost prudence, wisdom, and sweetness. He drew many to the Order who were renowned for their learning and piety, and who established numerous Convents. He himself was the founder of the celebrated Convent of Perugia, remarkable for being afterwards the scene of the canonization both of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and Saint Peter Martyr.

In his capacity of Provincial of the Roman Province, he assisted at the General Chapter of Bologna, A.D. 1233, at which took place the solemn translation of the relics of our Holy Father, Saint Dominic. The night before the ceremony, as Blessed Nicholas was reflecting on what was about to be done, not without a certain anxiety as to the results, a venerable old man appeared to him in a vision, saying to him those words of the Psalmist, "This man shall receive a blessing from the Lord and mercy from God his Saviour." The prediction was fully verified when, on the following day, Blessed Nicholas witnessed the prodigies whereby

God was pleased to honour the remains of His faithful servant. Feb. 14

He was himself a most eloquent preacher and untiring in his apostolic labours. On one occasion, when he was preaching in the Cathedral of Brescia before a great concourse of people, two dissolute young men disturbed the audience by their profane and wicked conduct. The holy man, finding them deaf to his remonstrances, left the church, and, ascending a neighbouring hill, called aloud, "Since men are so hardened as to reject the word of God, come, ye birds of heaven, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; come and listen to it." Instantly countless flocks of birds, large and small, gathered round him, arranged themselves in rows on the grass, and listened with every sign of attention, whilst the preacher addressed them for a good space. Then he gave them his blessing, as though to dismiss them, and they dispersed in all directions.

A worthy son of Saint Dominic, Blessed Nicholas had always cherished a tender devotion to the Holy Mother of God. A few days before his death Brother Rao, a fervent disciple of the Holy Patriarch, who had been dead many years, appeared to him, saying, "Dearest Brother, our Lady sends you word to prepare yourself, for the crown of glory is now ready for you." Blessed Nicholas died the death of the Saints in the autumn of A.D. 1255. It pleased God to manifest the sanctity of His faithful servant by many miracles. He received religious veneration from the time of his death, and was beatified by Leo XII., A.D. 1828.

Prayer

Mercifully infuse into us, O God, the spirit of Blessed Nicholas, Thy Confessor, that, as Thou didst adorn him with singular grace for the preaching of Thy

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- Feb. 14** word and procuring the salvation of his neighbour, so Thou wouldst grant us, through his prayers, ever to remain constant in the same holy vocation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY 15

Blessed Jordan of Saxony, Confessor

(A.D. 1190-1236)

- Feb. 15** BLESSED JORDAN belonged to the noble German family of the Counts of Eberstein, and was born in the Castle of Borrenstrick; in the diocese of Paderborn. He began his studies in his native land, and was sent to complete them at the University of Paris, where he made extraordinary progress in learning, whilst at the same time he led a life of singular innocence and piety. Though not rich, he had bound himself by vow daily to bestow an alms on the first poor person he should meet. Now it chanced that on one occasion, as he was hurrying to assist at Matins at Notre Dame and believed himself to be late, he was accosted by a beggar. Not having his purse about him, he bestowed on the poor man the richly ornamented belt which he wore according to the custom of the times. On entering the church, he beheld to his astonishment on the great crucifix the very belt of which he had just deprived himself for the love of Christ.

When our Holy Father Saint Dominic visited Paris in the year 1219, Jordan opened his whole soul to him and by his advice received Deacon's orders. It was, however, the preaching of Blessed Reginald of Orleans which decided his vocation to the Order. In company with his beloved friend, Henry of Cologne,

he received the habit in the Convent of Saint James Feb. 15
on Ash Wednesday, A.D. 1220. A few weeks later he assisted at the first General Chapter of the Order at Bologna, where he again had the happiness of beholding the Holy Patriarch whom he loved so tenderly. On his return to Paris he taught in the schools and preached with great success, winning to the Order many illustrious members of the University. In the year 1221 he was appointed Provincial of Lombardy. He arrived in Italy to find that Saint Dominic was dead; and the General Chapter of the following year elected him as the Saint's successor in the office of Master-General of the Order. During the fourteen years of his government he founded many convents and clothed so vast a number of novices that it became the custom to provide cloth and habits beforehand when he was expected at any monastery, as crowds of postulants were certain to present themselves.

Many beautiful stories are related in his life of these wonderful vocations, and of the sweetness and charity displayed by Blessed Jordan to his spiritual children. The holy man was of a singularly joyous and cheerful disposition and the most troublesome temptations were dispelled by his mere presence. He had also a wonderful power over the evil spirits, who, being greatly enraged at the fruits which followed on his preaching, tried every art to destroy him. On one occasion a possessed person entered his cell and cut his throat so terribly that there seemed to be no hope of his recovery. But Jordan, after submitting to all that the doctors thought fit to prescribe, rose from his bed as soon as they were gone, and desiring the Brethren to prepare everything for Mass, celebrated the Holy Sacrifice; and, washing the wound with some wine which had been poured into the

Feb. 15 chalice, it at once closed and healed, and he went the same day to preach before the Pope.

This diabolical persecution extended to the entire Order; everywhere the Brethren were subjected day and night to the most harassing attacks and terrifying apparitions. Blessed Jordan, in the general distress, had recourse to her who is terrible to the demons as an army in battle array. He ordained that the *Salve Regina*, which had hitherto been only recited daily after Compline, should henceforth be sung processionally; and the effect of this ordinance was the immediate disappearance of these troublesome visitants.

Year by year, save when prevented by ill-health, Blessed Jordan presided over the General Chapter, at that time held at Paris and Bologna alternately. In these Chapters he framed many wise regulations for the government of the Order, arranged for its establishment in every part of Europe, and sent missionaries even to the confines of China. The intervals between the Chapters were spent in apostolic journeyings over France, Germany, and Italy. He chose by preference for the scene of his labours one or other of the seats of the great universities, Paris, Bologna, Padua, or Vercelli. In 1230 he preached the Lent at Oxford, where he gained a rich harvest of vocations and presided over the first Provincial Chapter held in England. He kept up a constant affectionate correspondence with his spiritual daughter, Blessed Diana d'Andalo, whom he had himself installed in her Convent of St. Agnes at Bologna; and he continually commended to her prayers and those of her Community the success of his work for the salvation of souls.

At the General Chapter held at Bologna, A.D. 1233, Blessed Jordan had the consolation of assisting at the translation of the relics of Saint Dominic, a ceremony which was accompanied by many miracles and pro-

digies. With his own hands he laid the sacred remains in a new coffin and presented the holy skull to be kissed by more than three hundred of the Brethren. Feb. 15

Blessed Jordan was on terms of intimacy with the great Ghibelline Emperor, Frederic II., to whom he spoke with the utmost frankness and courage, reproving him for his impiety and vice, and fearlessly braving his anger in the cause of God.

This indefatigable labourer in the vineyard of the Lord suffered from continual ill-health, and towards the end of his life became almost blind in consequence of his wonderful gift of tears. He worked many miracles, and was favoured with numerous heavenly visions and revelations. He wrote a Life of Saint Dominic and composed a Little Office of five Psalms in honour of the holy name of Mary, to whom he bore the tenderest devotion. Willingly would we linger over this fascinating period of the history of the Order, and relate some of the many beautiful and edifying stories which reveal to us the sanctity of this most lovable servant of God, and which are to be found in the "Lives of the Brethren."¹ But it is time to close this brief notice by relating the circumstances of his untimely death, which occurred in the year 1236. As he was returning from the visitation of the convents in the Holy Land he was shipwrecked and drowned off Acre. His body and those of his companions were washed on shore by the waves; a bright light shone over them and a heavenly fragrance diffused itself around. Many miracles were worked at his tomb and through his intercession, and his glory in heaven was revealed to many. He was beatified by Leo XII.

¹ Recently translated into English by Rev. Father Placid Conway, O.P.

Prayer

- Feb. 15** O God, who madest Blessed Jordan wonderful for zeal in the saving of souls and for grace in the extending of religion, grant that, by his merits and intercession, we may ever live in the same spirit and find glory laid up for us in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY 18

Blessed Lawrence of Ripafratta, Confessor

(A.D. 1359-1457)

- Feb. 18** **BLESSED LAWRENCE** was born of noble parents in the Castle of Ripafratta, which in the Middle Ages protected the Pisan frontier from the incursions of the Florentines and of the inhabitants of Lucca. He took the habit in the Convent of Saint Catharine at Pisa at the age of twenty. At that period a terrible pestilence was ravaging Italy, which depopulated many of the Convents of the Order; the great Schism of the West also contributed not a little to the relaxation of discipline. Blessed Raymund of Capua, the confessor and disciple of Saint Catharine of Siena, who became Master-General of the Order, A.D. 1380, laboured strenuously for its reform, in which work he was powerfully seconded by Blessed Clara Gambacorti of Pisa and by Blessed John Dominici of Florence. The latter soon enlisted Blessed Lawrence in the cause of reform and was not slow to discover the merits of his new disciple. In him he found united angelic purity, great austerity of life, ardent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and inviolable fidelity to the most minute observances

enjoined by the Rule and Constitutions, together with **Feb. 18** such a profound knowledge of Holy Scripture that, like Saint Anthony of Padua, he was surnamed "the Ark of the Testament." He therefore appointed him Novice-master in the Convent of Cortona, about A.D. 1402. Among his novices Blessed Lawrence numbered Saint Antoninus, Blessed Peter Capucci, and the two artist brothers, Fra Giovanni Angelico and Fra Benedetto Mugello. Blessed Lawrence guided the young souls entrusted to his care with marvellous skill in the path of religious perfection. Equally on his guard against excessive rigour and enervating gentleness, he strove to enkindle the fire of Divine love in the hearts of his novices and then left it to God to do the rest. He had a wonderful capacity for discovering the special aptitude of each of his disciples; thus he advised Saint Antoninus to devote himself to study and Blessed Peter of Tiferno to contemplation; whilst he counselled Fra Angelico and Fra Benedetto to cultivate their talent for painting. "You will be none the less true Friars Preachers," he said to them; "for it is not only by preaching that we persuade men to practise virtue and avoid vice, but also by the arts, and specially by music and painting. It will certainly come to pass that a great number of sinners, who have turned a deaf ear to the preaching of your Brethren, will be won to God by your pictures. You have one advantage of which others are deprived; the most eloquent tongue becomes silent in the tomb, whereas your heavenly compositions will continue through the ages efficaciously to preach religion and virtue."

Blessed Lawrence did not confine his sphere of action to the walls of his Convent; he frequently preached the Word of God in the surrounding districts and drew many souls from the paths of perdition.

Feb. 18 Saint Antoninus in his writings does not hesitate to compare this holy man to Saint Paul, by reason of his zeal, the tribulations he had to undergo, and the sufferings which he inflicted on his own body.

After some years, Blessed Lawrence became Vicar-General of the congregation composed of the Convents which had embraced the reform, and took up his residence at Pistoia, where he laboured indefatigably among the plague-stricken in a season of great public calamity. Fabriano and other Italian cities were also at various times the scenes of his apostolic labours. Meanwhile the young religious whom he had trained had grown up to be pillars of the Order and of the Church, and models to those who came after them, whilst the reform in which he had taken so prominent a part was spreading from one end of Italy to the other and producing members renowned alike for their learning and sanctity. In the year 1446, he received the news that his beloved disciple, Saint Antoninus, had been named Archbishop of Florence. But neither the entreaties of the magistrates of the Republic nor the wishes of the Sovereign Pontiff himself could vanquish the humility of the Saint and induce him to accept the burden of the Episcopate, till Blessed Lawrence expressly commanded him to do so. His former Novice-master continued to be his guide and counsellor, as Saint Bernard had been to Pope Eugenius. The two faithful servants of God kept up a constant correspondence, portions of which have been preserved and bear witness to the sanctity of both.

Meanwhile Blessed Lawrence had attained almost to his hundredth year. Worn out by the fatigues of a laborious and penitential life and suffering much from a terrible ulcer in his leg, he received the last Sacraments with every mark of the most tender

Feb. 18

devotion. Then, raising himself up in his bed, the holy old man exhorted the weeping Brethren around him to the love of God and their neighbour and to unsparing exertions for the salvation of souls. He slept in the Lord at Pistoia on September 28, A.D. 1457. God speedily manifested the glory of His faithful servant, and his tomb was the scene of many miracles. Saint Antoninus, writing to console the community of Pistoia for their loss, bears a touching testimony to the memory of his beloved master: "To whom will you now have recourse for counsel in your doubts," he writes; "who is to help you in your needs and to be your light in the hour of temptation? . . . How many souls have not his words and example snatched from vice and hell to lead them to the summit of perfection! How many enemies has he not reconciled! How many discords has he not appeased! How many scandals has he not abolished! . . . I weep too over my own lot; for I shall never more receive any of those tender letters which he used to write to me, to stir up my zeal in the discharge of my pastoral office."

Blessed Lawrence was solemnly beatified by Pius IX., A.D. 1851.

Prayer

O God, who didst make blessed Lawrence, Thy Confessor, to shine forth by zeal for regular discipline and by the ardour of Divine love, grant, through his intercession, that, ever following the more perfect ways, we may attain to everlasting joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY 19

Blessed Alvarez of Cordova, Confessor

(Died A.D. 1420)

Feb. 19 BLESSED ALVAREZ was of noble parentage and took the habit in the Convent of Saint Paul at Cordova in Spain, A.D. 1368. He lived at the same time as Saint Vincent Ferrer, and his apostolic labours, zeal, and charity were singularly like those of his illustrious contemporary. After having, during several years, evangelized various provinces of Spain, Blessed Alvarez extended his labours to Italy and afterwards to Palestine. On his return to his native land he became confessor to the young King of Castile, Don John II. and to the Queen Regent, whom he greatly assisted in the government of the country by his wise counsels. But, earnestly desiring a more secluded life, he at length obtained permission to retire from the court, and founded in the neighbourhood of Cordova a Convent of strict observance, to which he gave the name of *Scala-Coeli* (*The Ladder of Heaven*). He received miraculous assistance during the erection of this Convent. Several times, when he was in want of building materials, invisible hands brought stones and other things during the night and were heard hewing and preparing them. In memory of the Holy Places at Jerusalem, he caused several oratories to be erected in the Convent grounds, in which were depicted the different mysteries of the Passion. The most remote of these, dedicated to our Lady of Compassion, was the scene of his nightly prayers and penances. He would drag himself thither on his knees, taking the discipline as he went, and those who watched him secretly often saw angels going

before him, clearing away the thorns and sharp stones from the rugged path. Like his Holy Patriarch, Saint Dominic, Blessed Alvarez was wont to spend great part of the night in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and to take his scanty repose on the altar step. Feb. 19

The favour which he enjoyed at court would have easily enabled him to obtain ample revenues for his new foundations, but he was an ardent lover of the poverty enjoined by the Rule, and the Community were often destitute of the bare necessities of life. On these occasions their wants were sometimes supplied in what appeared to be a miraculous manner. Once, when there was nothing to set before the Brethren for dinner but a single lettuce, left from the supper of the previous night, the holy man nevertheless commanded that they should assemble in the refectory as usual. The blessing was given, and then he earnestly besought God to have pity on His servants. As he prayed, the Convent bell rang and the porter found at the door a stranger leading a mule heavily laden with bread, wine, fish, and other provisions for the Community, who were never able to discover who their unknown benefactor had been. One day, as Blessed Alvarez was returning from preaching, he found a poor man lying in the street, covered with ulcers and apparently at the point of death. Wrapping the poor sufferer in his mantle, he bore him in his arms to the Convent and laid down his burden in the cloister; but, when the mantle was unfolded in presence of the Friars, instead of the loathsome object which they expected to behold, a large crucifix was disclosed to their astonished gaze. This crucifix was placed in the church and is held in great veneration even to this day. Another memorial of the holy man is a little bell, still called "the bell of Blessed Alvarez," which rings of itself whenever any one of the

Feb. 19 community or any notable member of the Order is about to die.

One of the greatest services which Blessed Alvarez and the fervent Community of Scala-Cœli rendered to the Church was the extirpation of the last remains of the great Schism of the West. Though the most powerful persons in the kingdom were strongly attached to the party of the anti-pope, Peter de Luna, the Friars succeeded in bringing the whole of Castile to the obedience of the lawfully elected Pontiff, Martin V.

Blessed Alvarez died on the 19th of February, A.D. 1420. A heavenly perfume often exhales from his sepulchre and many miracles have been worked through his intercession. Some years after his death, the Bishop of Cordova gave the Friars a church within the city and the Convent of Scala-Cœli was abandoned. They were anxious to remove the body of Blessed Alvarez to their new dwelling; but, each time they attempted to do so, they were prevented by a sudden and terrific thunderstorm. More than a century later, the celebrated Father Lewis of Granada repaired the church and convent and again established a community there. Blessed Alvarez was beatified by Benedict XIV., A.D. 1741.

Prayer

O God, who didst richly endow the Blessed Alvarez, Thy Confessor, with the gifts of charity and penance, grant that we, by his intercession and example, may ever bear the mortification of Christ in our bodies and Thy love in our hearts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FEBRUARY 21

Blessed Aimo Taparelli, Confessor

(A.D. 1395-1495)

AIMO TAPARELLI was a member of the illustrious Feb. 21 family of the Counts of Lagnasco, and was born at Savigliano in Piedmont, A.D. 1395. As a youth he was remarkable both for his great personal beauty and his singular talents; but, in spite of every advantage which the world could offer, he very early resolved to embrace the religious life and entered the Dominican Convent of his native place. He was no less distinguished for his sweetness of disposition, humility, and mortification than for his earnest application to study. Whilst still young, he was called upon to teach publicly in the University of Turin, where he gained universal applause. He found leisure also for preaching, and had the consolation of bringing a vast number of sinners to repentance and of reconciling many heretics to the Church. His fame reached the ears of Blessed Amadeo, Duke of Savoy, who made choice of him to preach at his court and is said to have sometimes consulted him on the affairs of his conscience.

After the martyrdom of Blessed Bartholomew of Cerverio, Blessed Aimo was appointed his successor as Commissary of the Inquisition and shortly afterwards Inquisitor-General in Upper Lombardy and Liguria, a difficult and laborious office, which he continued to discharge until his death. He also filled important posts as Prior of Savigliano and Vicar Provincial, in which capacity he did much for the promotion of regular discipline.

Feb. 21 In the midst of his manifold labours he preserved great recollection and peace of soul. These words were ever on his lips, "To serve God is to reign." He inscribed them on the walls of his cell and in another form on the front of the Church: "Our salvation consists solely in serving God. All else is deceit." *Sola salus servire Deo ; sunt cætera fraudes.* His whole life was a practical illustration of this maxim.

He was much given to prayer and offered the Holy Sacrifice with extraordinary devotion. He was wont often to retire to a solitary mountain in the neighbourhood of Saluzzo, there to devote himself to contemplation and to keep up the fire of Divine love in his soul. He bore a special devotion to the Holy Angels, conversing familiarly with them and being often favoured by their visits. On the Festival of Saint Hippolytus and his Companions, Martyrs, as he recited in the Office the words, "The Saints shall rejoice in glory," the Angels responded, "They shall be joyful in their beds." This he took to be a sign of his approaching death, which happened two days later on the Feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, towards whom he had ever borne a tender devotion. On the day of his death he recited his office and received the Last Sacraments. In his agony, the holy old man, who was in his hundredth year, clasped his crucifix closely to his breast and continued to hold it tightly long after his spirit had departed. This happened in the year 1495. At the beginning of the present century the remains of Blessed Aimo were translated to the Church of Saint Dominic at Turin. He was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O Almighty God, to serve whom is to reign, grant, through the merits and intercession of Blessed Aimo,

Thy Confessor, whom Thou didst render a signal champion of the faith, that, faithfully keeping Thy commandments upon earth, we may deserve to enjoy Thy eternal kingdom with him in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. Feb. 21

FEBRUARY 25

Blessed Constantius of Fabriano, Confessor

(A.D. 1410-1481)

BLESSED CONSTANTIUS was born at Fabriano in Italy, A.D. 1410, and his family name was Servoli. He was remarkable as a child for his tender piety, so that the neighbours used to call him "the friend of God." He had a sister nine years old, who for seven years had been suffering from an incurable malady. One day, after fervent prayer, little Constantius led his father and mother to the invalid's bedside and made them kneel down with him. Then he prayed aloud for his sister's recovery, and immediately she was restored to perfect health. As though to prognosticate his future vocation to the Order of Preachers, the child continually addressed fervent and forcible exhortations to all who would listen to him and succeeded in bringing some hardened sinners to repentance. Feb. 25

At the age of fifteen he entered the Dominican noviciate at the Convent of Saint Lucy at Fabriano, which had enjoyed the privilege of having successively as priors the Blessed John Dominici, the Blessed Laurence of Ripafratta, and Saint Antoninus, and which he was destined himself one day to govern. Here he made admirable progress in learning and sanctity, and he afterwards taught with great profit to his hearers in many of the cities of Italy.

Feb. 25 Blessed Constantius led a life of extreme austerity and devoted much time to prayer, spending great part of the night before the Blessed Sacrament and watering the pavement of the Church with his tears. He was accustomed daily to recite the Office of the Dead and very frequently the entire Psalter ; and, in order to encourage his Brethren to practise the latter devotion, he used to tell them that he had never failed to obtain from God whatever he had asked of Him by its means. When the Turks attacked Constantinople, A.D. 1453, the Friars begged Blessed Constantius to say the Psalter in order to obtain their defeat ; but, though he began it several times, he was always prevented from finishing it ; whence he concluded that it was the will of God that, in punishment for the sins of Christendom, the Mahometans should be victorious.

Blessed Constantius held the office of Prior successively in the Convents of Perugia and of Ascoli. It was during his period of government of the last-named Convent, that, on the morning of the Feast of the Ascension, A.D. 1459, he beheld in vision the soul of Saint Antoninus being borne, marvellously beautiful, to heaven. In the Bull of Canonization of the great Archbishop of Florence, Pope Clement VII. mentions this vision and speaks of Blessed Constantius, with whom he had been personally acquainted whilst Governor of Fabriano, as "a man no less illustrious for his sanctity of life than for his learning."

This holy man possessed the gift of prophecy and his miracles were very numerous. On one occasion he raised to life a young man who had been dead two days. The relatives of the deceased and the other bystanders reviled him, accusing him of tempting God when they heard him address the corpse with the words, " In the name of Jesus Christ, arise ;" but when they saw the dead man rise, they threw themselves in

terror at Blessed Constantius's feet. He gently raised them from the ground, saying, "Never despise the servants of God and remember Our Lord's promise : ' He that believeth in Me, the works that I do he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do.' " Feb. 25

The countenance of Blessed Constantius habitually wore that look of gentle sadness which is said to have been the characteristic of all the disciples of Saint Catharine of Siena and of those whom they trained to the religious life, and which is sufficiently accounted for by the wickedness of the times in which their lot was cast. In the case of Blessed Constantius, however, it seems also to have had its source in an interior trial permitted by God for his sanctification ; for, being once asked why he never looked perfectly happy, he replied, " Alas ! I know not whether my actions are pleasing to God or not."

The Convent of Ascoli was the last to enjoy the blessing of being governed by this faithful servant of God, and there he died on the 24th of February, A.D. 1481. Scarcely had he expired when a crowd of little children ran through the streets exclaiming, " The holy Prior is dead ! " He was beatified by Pius VII., A.D. 1811.

Prayer

O God, who didst make the Blessed Constantius, Thy Confessor, glorious amongst the people for his continual exercise of prayer and his zeal in the promotion of peace, grant, by his intercession, that, walking always in the paths of justice, we may attain to everlasting peace and glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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FEBRUARY 28

Blessed Villana de Botti

(Died A.D. 1360)

Feb. 28 VILLANA was a member of the noble family De Botti and was born at Florence. Her childhood was spent in acts of astonishing devotion and in the exercise of austerities such as are rarely practised even by persons advanced in age and virtue. She ardently desired to embrace the religious life ; but, over-persuaded by her parents, she at length consented to marry and her nuptials were celebrated with the utmost magnificence. Possibly her early piety may have had in it some tinge of pride, which necessarily led to a fall. Be this as it may, immediately on her marriage she abandoned all her exercises of prayer and penance and gave herself up to a life of heartless and sinful dissipation. How long this lasted we are not told ; but God, who had chosen her for Himself, at length recalled her to better things in a wonderful manner.

One night Villana was preparing for an entertainment of unwonted splendour. She was dressed with all the sumptuous extravagance of the times ; jewels sparkled in her hair, on her arms, on her very shoes. Before leaving her room, she went to cast one parting glance at the mirror. But, instead of the dazzling image of her own beauty, a horrible spectacle met her eyes. God had permitted that the deformity of the soul within should become visible on the outward person. Her hair, bound with gold and jewelled chains, she beheld transformed into a mass of coiled and venomous serpents ; her fair face was darkened into that of a hideous negro ; her eyes were red and

fiery, and, instead of her beautiful mouth and ivory teeth, there grinned the open jaws of a monster of hell. Then Villana's heart opened to know where and whence she had fallen. She tore the jewels from her hair and left her palace, not for the gay entertainment that awaited her, but for the neighbouring church of the Dominicans, where, flinging herself at the feet of a holy Friar, she made, amidst tears of contrition, the confession of her life. Feb. 28

She returned home to enter upon a rigorous course of penance, which continued until her death. To atone for her past vanity and to honour the poverty of her Divine Master, she thenceforth wore only poor and shabby garments, and she divided her time between exercises of prayer and austerity and the care of the indigent. She earnestly desired to retire to a hermitage; her confessor, however, would not permit her to do this, but he gave her the habit of the Third Order. Trampling under foot all human respect, she wished to go from door to door begging alms for her beloved poor, and she only relinquished this intention in obedience to the will of her husband. She had thoroughly realised the presence of Our Lord in the person of His poor; and this truth was yet more vividly brought home to her by a miraculous incident. One day, as she was returning from church, she found a poor sick beggar lying in a miserable condition in the street. Taking him in her arms and gathering superhuman strength from her charity, Villana carried him to one of the public hospitals and laid him on a bed, whilst she went to seek the necessary remedies. On her return, the bed was empty, and the most careful inquiries failed to discover any traces of the sick beggar, who was always believed to have been our Divine Lord Himself.

On one occasion, when she had had a fierce encoun-

Feb. 28 ter with the devil, Saint Catharine the Martyr appeared to her with a beautiful crown in her hand, saying, "Be constant, my daughter, and behold the magnificent reward which awaits thee in heaven." This vision was regarded by Villana as a presage of her approaching death. From that time her sufferings and maladies increased and with them her thirst to endure yet more for the Beloved of her soul. "No, Lord," she once exclaimed when she felt better, "I do not ask for any alleviation of my sufferings but rather that they may be increased."

Having received the Last Sacraments with great devotion, she begged to have the Passion of Our Lord read to her, and at the words, "Bowing His head He gave up the ghost," she placidly expired, A.D. 1360. When the Sisters of the Third Order prepared the body for burial it became resplendent with beauty, and emitted such dazzling rays of light that they could not fix their eyes upon it. To satisfy the devotion of the people it was left unburied for the space of thirty-seven days, and was still perfectly incorrupt when laid in the tomb. Villana appeared after her death to some holy women who were spending the night in prayer, and, in answer to their inquiries, she said, "Call me no longer Villana; now that I am in heaven I am called Margaret or the Pearl." She was beatified by Leo XII., A.D. 1829.

Prayer

O God, who didst mercifully call back Thy handmaid, the Blessed Villana, from the snares of the world, causing her to pass through all the ways of humility and penance, grant, through her intercession, that we, confessing our guilt, may find forgiveness with Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THURSDAY AFTER SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

Translation of the Relics of Saint Catharine of Siena

THIS festival was originally established under the name of the Commemoration of Saint Catharine of Siena or Feast of her Espousals, to perpetuate the memory of the mysterious favour conferred upon her in the year 1367, when the Saint had attained the age of twenty.

Thursday
after
Sexa-
gesima

The city of Siena was given up to the riotous festivities usual at the close of the Carnival, and Catharine had shut herself up in her cell, seeking by prayer and fasting to make reparation for the offences committed by the thoughtless crowds who passed her door. Then our Lord appeared to her, and addressed her in these words: "Because thou hast forsaken all the vanities of the world and set thy love upon Me, and because thou hast, for My sake, rather chosen to afflict thy body with fasting than to eat flesh with others, especially at this time, when all others that dwell around thee, yea, and those also who dwell in the same house with thee, are banqueting and making good cheer, therefore I am determined this day to keep a solemn feast with thee and with great joy and pomp to espouse thy soul to Me in faith." As He was yet speaking, there appeared in the same place the most glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the beloved disciple Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Paul the Apostle, and the great patriarch and founder of her Order, Saint Dominic; and after these came the kingly prophet and poet, David, with a musical psaltery in his hand, on which he played a heavenly

Thursday
after
Sexa-
gesima

melody of ineffable sweetness. Then our Blessed Lady came to Catharine and took her hand, which she held towards her Divine Son, and besought Him that He would vouchsafe to espouse her to Himself in faith. To which He consented with a very sweet and lovely countenance, and, taking out a ring that was set about with four precious pearls and had in the other part a marvellous rich diamond, He put the same on the finger of her right hand, saying thus, "Behold, I here espouse thee to Me, Thy Maker and Saviour, in faith, which shall continue in thee from this time forward, evermore unchanged, until the time shall come of a blissful consummation in the joys of heaven. Now then, act courageously. Thou art armed with faith, and shalt triumph over all thy enemies." The vision disappeared, but the ring, invisible indeed to other eyes than Catharine's, remained upon her finger, a mysterious token of the love of her Divine Spouse.

We are expressly told that this event took place on "the *last* day of the Carnival," which in Siena was the *Tuesday* after Sexagesima; but, following the more general custom, the feast which commemorates it has always been kept on the *Thursday*. This feast was raised to a higher rank and its name changed to that of the Translation of the Relics of Saint Catharine in the year 1866.

The holy Virgin of Siena died in Rome, A.D. 1380, and was first interred in the cemetery adjoining the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, but later on the sacred remains were removed by the Master of the Order, Blessed Raymund of Capua, formerly her confessor, to a stone sarcophagus on the right-hand side of the high altar of the church. When he had done this, he remembered what Saint Catharine had predicted to him on the Eve of Saint Francis, when

they were together at Voragine on their journey back from Avignon, namely, that he should on that same day in a future year cause such a translation of her body to be made. Blessed Raymund afterwards detached the head from the body and sent it to the Convent of San Domenico at Siena, where it was at first carefully concealed, as the holy relic could not be exposed to public veneration before the Saint had been raised to the altars of the Church. Subsequently, however—probably in the year 1385—Father Raymund made known to the Consistory of the Republic in what manner the head of their beloved fellow-citizen had been brought into their midst, and it was resolved that a grand festival should be celebrated and a solemn procession made to receive the sacred relic, as though it had been but newly brought to the city. The most touching feature in this celebration, of which minute accounts have been preserved to us, was the presence of the Saint's aged mother, Lapa, who walked in the ranks of the Sisters of the Third Order, close behind the canopy, beneath which was borne the head of her beloved child.

Thursday
after
Sexa-
gesima

It would be tedious to speak of the various relics which at different periods have been detached from the holy body and bestowed on various convents of the Order; of the translation of the sacred remains to the Rosary Chapel, made by Saint Antoninus when Prior of the Minerva; and of yet a third translation, at the time of Saint Catharine's canonization. A fourth and last translation took place in our own times. On 17th April, A.D. 1855, when the Church of the Minerva was undergoing restoration, the Saint's sarcophagus was again opened by Father Alexander Vincent Jandel, General of the Order, on which occasion a considerable portion of the sacred relics was taken out and sent by his Most Revd. Paternity to

Thursday
after
Sexa-
gesima

Saint Dominic's Convent, Stone, the Mother-House of the English Congregation of Sisters of Penance, which bears the name of Saint Catharine. On August 4th of the same year, the restoration of the Minerva having been completed, Pius IX. of holy and happy memory consecrated the high altar with his own hands ; and the remains of the Virgin Saint of Siena, after having been carried in solemn procession through the streets of the Eternal City, were, a few days later, laid to rest beneath the same high altar, where they still repose.

Prayer

O God, who didst grant to Blessed Catharine, adorned with an especial privilege of virginity and patience, to overcome the assaults of evil spirits and to stand unshaken in the love of Thy Holy Name, grant, we beseech Thee, that, after her example, treading under foot the wickedness of the world and overcoming the wiles of all our enemies, we may safely pass onward to Thy glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH 1

Blessed Christopher of Milan, Confessor

(A.D. 1484)

March 1 BLESSED CHRISTOPHER was one of the apostolic men who flourished in the Order in the fifteenth century. He belonged to the great Convent of Saint Eustorgius at Milan, and was distinguished for his spirit of prayer and penance, and for a remarkable gift of prophecy, of which many instances occur in his life. He preached with great success in various parts of Italy, specially in Western Lombardy. In the year 1460 he exercised

his apostolic functions with such success at Taggia, a town on the Riviera, not far from San Remo, that the inhabitants determined to build a Convent for the Friars, in the hope of retaining Father Christopher in their midst. The building was raised on a site whereon the holy man is said to have seen the Holy Ghost descending in the form of a dove, a happy augury of the graces and blessings which God intended to shower down on the future Community. In the same place Blessed Christopher also built a large chapel in honour of our Blessed Lady, which, in obedience to her own command, was dedicated under the title of Our Lady of Mercy.

The servant of God governed this new Convent for several years and drew to the Order many excellent subjects whom he carefully trained in the way of religious perfection. He had an especial zeal for the due celebration of the Divine Office and ordained that the Father appointed to discharge the office of Hebdomadarius, whose duty it was to preside at the Divine Office and sing the Conventual Mass, should, after the example of the priests who served in the Temple of old, not be allowed to go out, but during his week of office be occupied solely in the Divine worship and in the work of his own sanctification, remaining in solitude with God on behalf of his Brethren who were employed in the other offices.

He also regulated the studies of the religious, causing them to devote themselves to the assiduous reading of Holy Scripture and of the Fathers, specially of the Angelic Doctor. Blessed Christopher has left many writings, chiefly sermons, which are preserved to this day as most useful for religious, specially for preachers.

The holy man lived to an advanced age, labouring indefatigably for the glory of God and the salvation of

March 1

March 1 souls. He was seized with his death-illness whilst preaching the Lent in the little town of Pigna. He immediately caused himself to be carried back to his beloved Convent of Taggia, where he received the Holy Sacraments with the utmost devotion, and, singing and praying, gave up his soul to God, surrounded by his weeping Brethren. His blessed death took place in the year 1484. Many miracles were worked at his tomb, and the devotion to him has been uninterrupted even to our own days. He was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, who didst render Blessed Christopher, Thy Confessor, Thy worthy servant, grant that by his merits and example we may ever bear Christ in the whole intention of our mind and in the whole affection of our heart. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

MARCH 2

Blessed Henry Suso, Confessor

(A.D. 1300-1365)

March 2 HENRY SUSO was a German by birth, and at the age of thirteen took the habit in the Dominican Convent at Constance. He showed but little fervour during his noviciate and lived in negligence and dissipation till he had completed his eighteenth year. But the Divine Wisdom, whose devoted disciple he was destined to become, was pleased to touch his heart. One day, as he sat at table in the refectory, he heard read aloud some passages from the Book of Wisdom, which produced a powerful effect on his soul. He began to

undertake a thorough change of life, but was beset by grievous temptations, all of which he generously and perseveringly overcame. For two-and-twenty years he practised the most terrific austerities. During eight years he wore on his shoulders a cross studded with sharp nails; twice every day he disciplined himself to blood; day and night he wore a hair shirt armed with one hundred and fifty sharp iron points; and in addition to these mortifications he observed extraordinary abstinence, enduring in particular the utmost extremity of thirst. March 2

Nevertheless, when he had come to his fortieth year, it was revealed to him, that, after all these sufferings, he had only reached the first degree of true mortification, and that, if he would attain the perfect love of God, he must consent to pass through far more searching trials. He had to endure the most cruel calumnies, frightful interior desolation, the loss of friends and of reputation, and a thousand other crosses; yet in the midst of all these afflictions, which were exquisitely painful to his sensitive heart, he never lost confidence or courage.

Blessed Henry Suso bore a tender devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. He engraved it with a sharp penknife over his heart, and found in that adorable Name a buckler of defence against all the assaults of his enemies. This devotion to the Holy Name was widely diffused amongst his spiritual children, many of whom used to wear a small scapular, on which were embroidered the letters I.H.S.

His love for our Blessed Lady was of the tenderest and most childlike description. During the Christmas season he always deprived himself of a portion of the fruit served at table, offering it in spirit to her and praying her to give it to her Divine Child, for whose sake he went without it. As soon as the first flowers

March 2 appeared in spring, he hastened to weave a garland which he placed on the head of Mary's statue in the Lady Chapel, in the hope that, as she was the fairest of all flowers and the bliss of summer to his heart, she would not disdain to accept these first flowers from her servant. He had many devotional practices in honour of his Heavenly Mother and she sometimes deigned to show herself to him in vision.

Full of zeal for the salvation of souls, Blessed Henry laboured constantly in the ministry of the Word, and was one of the most renowned preachers and spiritual directors of his day. He was endowed with a sublime gift of prayer and the numerous spiritual works which he composed won for him in his own time the title of the Ecstatic Doctor. The best known of his writings is his "Little Book of Eternal Wisdom," which treats chiefly of the Passion of Our Lord.

Blessed Henry passed to a better life in the Convent of Ulm in Germany, on the 25th January, A.D. 1365. From the time of his death he was beatified by the voice of the people, and Pope Gregory XVI. approved of the veneration which had been paid to him from time immemorial and gave permission for his Office to be celebrated throughout the Dominican Order.

Prayer

O God, who didst make Thy holy Confessor, Blessed Henry, wonderful for charity and bodily mortification, grant that in all our works we may have the marks of Christ crucified upon us and ever bear His love in our hearts. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH 6

Blessed Jordan of Pisa, Confessor

(Died A.D. 1311)

BLESSED JORDAN of Pisa, called also Jordan of **March 6** Rivalto, was born in Italy in the latter half of the thirteenth century. After studying humanities at Paris, he took the habit of the Dominican Order at Pisa, A.D. 1280. Having completed his noviciate he pursued his studies at the Universities of Bologna and Paris and became a distinguished lector, teaching with great success in some of the most important convents of the Order. Blessed Jordan's learning was said to excel that of all the other Fathers of his Province put together. Besides being an eminent philosopher and theologian, he had studied Greek and Hebrew, and was gifted with so prodigious a memory that he is reported to have known by heart the Breviary and Missal, the greater part of the Bible, and a large portion of the *Summa* of Saint Thomas. But his renown as a saintly religious and an apostolic preacher far exceeded even his reputation for learning. Following the new custom just then coming into vogue, he used to preach in Italian instead of Latin, and the fragments of his sermons which have come down to us are regarded as models of pure and beautiful diction. The Italian language at that time was as yet unformed. The irruptions of the northern nations had corrupted the dialects spoken in various parts of the Peninsula, and there might be said to be no vocabulary of purely Italian words. In spite of these difficulties, Jordan succeeded in forming for himself a beautiful system of language and we are expressly

March 6 told that the words he used were intelligible to all. These words in no way differ from those now in use; whence Blessed Jordan is justly entitled to the honour of being among the first to give its present fixed and beautiful form to the Tuscan tongue.

The holy man exercised his apostolic ministry in many cities of Italy and probably also in Germany. But Florence was the chief scene of his labours and his popularity there was unbounded. He sometimes preached as often as five times on the same day and to the same audience, who never wearied of listening to his words. As the churches were too small to contain the crowds who flocked to hear him, he frequently delivered his discourses in the public squares. Italy, at the close of the thirteenth century, was a prey to terrible dissensions and to the deadly feuds of the Guelphs and Ghibellines; but by dint of prayer and preaching Blessed Jordan succeeded in extinguishing all animosity for a time in Florence and in establishing peace between the rival factions. The city was completely transformed, the women laid aside their luxurious apparel, sinners abandoned their vices and gave themselves fervently to the practice of virtue; and the holy man was able to say with regard to his penitents, "I know many who are prepared to sacrifice their property and even life itself, rather than commit a mortal sin." His success at Pisa was equally great, and a Confraternity in honour of our Divine Saviour established by him in that city subsists even to our own day. His style of preaching was eloquent but simple, and adapted to the capacity of his audience, and his sermons were interspersed with anecdotes, usually drawn from Holy Scripture. His confidence in God and in the efficacy of prayer knew no bounds. Preaching one day on the conditions which should accompany prayer, he exclaimed, "If you pray thus,

I swear to you by Christ, by the Holy Scriptures, by all the Saints, and by my own soul, that you will obtain whatever you ask; for heaven and earth would sooner perish than that your prayer should go unheard." March 6

Blessed Jordan had a filial devotion to our Blessed Lady. The old chronicle records that it was always he who began her Office in the dormitory, and he did so with a voice so loud and clear and fervent as to animate his Brethren to similar piety. One day a beautiful vision was granted to him as he sat at table in the refectory. He beheld the Queen of Heaven, escorted by two princesses of paradise and by a multitude of angels, bringing food to the Brethren and serving them with their own hands. The name of his Holy Father Saint Dominic was constantly on his lips and he lost no opportunity of celebrating his praises in the pulpit.

In the midst of all his success, the servant of God ever preserved profound humility of heart and had a horror of all earthly honours and dignities. His superiors, however, were anxious that he should take his Doctor's degree and in obedience to their commands he accordingly set out for Paris. But on arriving at Piacenza, he fell sick and piously departed to our Lord on the 19th of August, A.D. 1311, being assisted on his death-bed by the Master-General and other members of his Order. When the sad news reached Pisa, the principal inhabitants at once set out for Piacenza to bring back the sacred remains, which were met outside the city by a vast concourse of people, weeping and mourning over the loss of their beloved fellow-citizen. Many miraculous favours were granted through his intercession and the walls of the Dominican Church in which he was interred became covered with pictures and *ex-votos*, bearing witness to his power with God.

- March 6** Pope Gregory XVI. approved the veneration which for upwards of five centuries had been rendered to Blessed Jordan, and gave permission for the annual celebration of his festival throughout the Dominican Order and in the diocese of Pisa.

Prayer

O God, who madest Thy holy Confessor, Blessed Jordan, a fitting minister for the preaching of the Gospel, grant that we, in imitation of him, may do the works which Thou ordainest and so gain the fruit of eternal salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH 7

Saint Thomas Aquinas, Confessor, Doctor of the Church, and Patron of Catholic Schools

(A.D. 1225-1274)

- March 7** SAINT THOMAS was born of noble parents about the year 1225, in the fortress of Rocca-Secca, in the south of Italy; and to the neighbouring little town of Aquino he owed his surname of Aquinas. When he was quite a child, a terrific thunderstorm burst over the castle, and his nurse and little sister were struck dead in the very chamber in which Thomas slept on unharmed. This circumstance accounts for the great fear of thunder and lightning which the Saint is said to have had through his life, which caused him often to take refuge in the church during a thunderstorm, even leaning his head against the tabernacle, so as to place himself as closely as possible under the protection of our Lord; hence the popular devotion to him as patron against thunderstorms and sudden death. The words *Ave Maria* were the first which

his baby lips were heard to utter ; and, long before he could read, to place a book in his hands was discovered to be an unfailing means of drying his tears in all his childish troubles. March 7

When only five years old, his education was begun by the monks of the celebrated Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino and by the time he had reached his eleventh year he had made such progress that his parents sent him under the care of a tutor to the newly founded University of Naples. The Dominican Church in that city became one of his favourite resorts, and, whilst still quite a boy, he asked and obtained the habit of the Order. As the Saint and his religious Brethren believed his family to be extremely averse to the step he had taken, he was hurried off to Rome, whence it was intended to remove him to Paris. But, on the way thither he was waylaid by his brothers, two young officers in the service of the Emperor, and sent back to his angry parents at Rocca-Secca. Here he was imprisoned in one of the towers of the castle, where he had to suffer cold, hunger, and every sort of privation. Worse than this, his brothers even went so far as to introduce a woman of evil life into his chamber ; but with a flaming brand snatched from the hearth the Saint drove the miserable creature from his presence. With the same brand he then traced a cross upon the wall ; and, casting himself upon his knees before it, besought of God to grant him the gift of perpetual chastity. As he prayed, he fell into an ecstasy, during which two angels appeared and girded him with a miraculous cord, at the same time assuring him that his petition had been granted. In memory of this event a Confraternity was established in the sixteenth century, called the "Angelic Warfare," to obtain through the intercession of Saint Thomas the virtue of chastity. This Confraternity still flourishes.

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March 7 Discovering that his constancy was not to be overcome by persecution, his disappointed relatives at length connived at his escape, and he was let down from the tower in a basket to the Friars who by appointment were waiting below. They carried off their rescued treasure to Naples, where he was immediately admitted to profession. Thence he was sent to Cologne, where he became the disciple of Blessed Albert the Great, the renowned Dominican professor of the day. The humble Saint at first succeeded in concealing his extraordinary talents from the knowledge of his Brethren, but when at length they were accidentally discovered, his delighted Master exclaimed, "We call Brother Thomas 'the dumb ox ;' but I tell you he will one day make his bellowing heard to the uttermost parts of the earth." Blessed Albert and his saintly pupil afterwards taught together, with immense applause, first at Paris and subsequently at Cologne. It was in the University of the former city that Saint Thomas took his degrees, first as Bachelor and afterwards as Doctor in Theology. On both these occasions he had as his companion his beloved friend, the great Franciscan theologian, Saint Bonaventure.

Saint Thomas commented on the works of Aristotle, and, having purged the text of the pagan philosopher from everything that was opposed to the truths of faith, established a complete system of Christian philosophy. Amongst his many works we may mention his "Summa against the Gentiles," his treatises on the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Creed, and, most important of all, his "Summa of Theology," which, however, he did not live to complete. It was at his earnest entreaty that Pope Urban IV. extended the celebration of the Festival of Corpus Christi, already kept in Germany and the Low Countries, to the

Universal Church. The Saint wrote the Office for the feast and was the author of those hymns to the Blessed Sacrament with which we are all familiar from their use in processions and at Benediction. He also composed the *Adoro Te* and the *Anima Christi* ("Soul of Christ, sanctify me," &c.), which was a favourite prayer with Saint Ignatius. On one occasion our Lord spoke to him from a crucifix, saying, "Thou hast written well of me, Thomas, what reward wilt thou have?" To which the Saint replied, "No other than Thyself, O Lord."

Saint Thomas had not yet completed his fiftieth year, when, worn out by his labours in preaching and teaching, he breathed his last at the Benedictine Abbey of Fossa Nuova, on his way to attend the General Council of Lyons. His death took place on the 7th of March, A.D. 1274. He was canonized A.D. 1323 by John XXII.; A.D. 1567, Saint Pius V. conferred on him the title of Doctor of the Church; and A.D. 1880, Leo XIII. declared him patron of all Catholic universities, academies, colleges, and schools.

Humility was ever the characteristic virtue of this great servant of God and from his humility sprang his extreme modesty in the expression of his opinion. Though raised so high above others by his gigantic intellectual powers, Saint Thomas was the sweetest and most charitable of masters and of fathers, always ready to stoop to the capacity of the youngest and dullest of his scholars. No matter how important the affair might be on which he was engaged, his cell was always open to his Brethren whenever they wished to speak to him, and he would cheerfully turn from the most absorbing occupation to give them his undivided attention. Most touching and beautiful is the account left us of his manner of spending his time and of the means he adopted for sanctifying the ordinary actions

March 7 of the day by devotional practices. But the limited space at our disposal in this short biography compels us to conclude. We can but mention one out of many of his remarkable sayings, viz., the answer given by him to his sister when she asked him what she must do to become a Saint. "*Velle*," he replied, *i.e.* "Will it."

Prayer

(As on the Feast of his Translation, Jan. 28, p. 21.)

MARCH 10

Blessed Peter di Jeremia, Confessor

(A.D. 1381-1452)

March 10 BLESSED PETER was born of noble parents in the city of Palermo in Sicily and gave early signs, not only of surpassing genius, but of much devotion and sanctity. He went through his studies with great distinction in the University of Bologna and was about to take his degree as Doctor in Law, when an extraordinary circumstance turned his thoughts from worldly honours and led him to consecrate himself wholly to God. One night, as he was studying in his chamber, which was on the third storey, he was startled by loud and repeated knocks at the window. Summoning up all his courage, he inquired who his supernatural visitor might be. "I am such a one," was the reply, "thy relative. After having taken my Doctor's degree, I was called to the bar, where, as thou knowest, I discharged my duties with much distinction and success. Blind and miserable wretch! I spent all my time in defending others and I undertook very unjust causes in order to obtain for myself honour and wealth,

contrary to the dictates of my conscience. Alas! I March 10 found none to plead my cause before the terrible judgment-seat of God and I am condemned to everlasting torments. But, before the ministers of the Divine justice cast me into hell, I have been sent to give thee this warning: flee from the tribunals of men if thou wouldst fain be acquitted before the judgment-seat of God." Then, with a despairing howl, the terrible visitor departed.

Peter instantly formed the resolution of consecrating himself entirely to the service of God and there and then took a vow of perpetual chastity. When morning dawned, he went to a locksmith and procured an iron chain of fourteen pounds' weight, with which he girded himself, passing it three times round his waist and riveting it by a plate of copper. During the remaining fifty-one years of his life, this terrible instrument of penance was never laid aside, and, when his body was prepared for burial, it was found deeply imbedded in the flesh. After earnest prayer that he might be directed in his choice of the religious Order in which he should devote himself to the Divine service, he entered the Dominican noviceship at Bologna, A.D. 1400.

After the completion of his studies, Blessed Peter became a distinguished preacher and exercised his apostolic ministry all over Italy. So numerous were the conversions wrought by his sermons, that Saint Vincent Ferrer, when visiting Bologna, asked to see him, embraced him affectionately, and exhorted him to persevere in this blessed work, to which he was visibly called by God.

The holy man took an active part in the General Council of Florence, held under the pontificate of Eugenius IV. for the reunion of the Greek and Latin Churches. All the Fathers of the Council were in

March 10 admiration at his zeal for the faith, his profound learning, and the cogency of his arguments, and the Pope sought to manifest his appreciation of his services by raising him to high ecclesiastical dignities. All these the holy man steadfastly declined; he was, however, compelled to accept the office of Apostolic Visitor in Sicily, though out of humility he begged that his powers might be limited to the restoration of regular observance amongst religious and especially his own Order. His labours in this difficult and delicate work were singularly blessed; he not only re-established strict discipline in the Convents, many of which had fallen into relaxation during the Great Schism of the West, but became the apostle of the island. The fruits of his preaching in Palermo were so abundant that the churches were too small to contain the crowds who flocked to hear him and he was often obliged to deliver his sermons in the public squares or in the open country. In reward for his zeal, God frequently worked miracles, enabling his voice to be heard to a distance of upwards of half a league.

Blessed Peter's attraction was to the contemplative life, and he spent great part of his days and nights in prayer and in the practice of the severest austerities, similar to those of the ancient Fathers of the Desert. Many miracles are recorded to have been worked by this faithful servant of God. When he was Prior of the Convent of Palermo, the Procurator one day came to tell him that there were no provisions in the Convent. Blessed Peter immediately set out for a place on the sea-shore two miles from the city to beg an alms of the fishermen; for he knew that great quantities of tunny fish were being caught at that time. The fishermen drove him away with abuse, rudely refusing to let him have a single fish. The holy man answered nothing, but, returning to his little boat,

directed his course back to Palermo. The shoals of fish were enclosed alive in great stake-nets; but, as soon as Blessed Peter left the shore, they all leapt out of their prisons and swam in a vast body after his boat, as though determined not to remain the prey of these churlish men, though willing to be taken by him. The dismayed fishermen then hurried after the man of God and besought his pardon. The holy Prior made the sign of the cross; whereupon the fishes obediently returned to the nets; and, having received the assistance he required, Blessed Peter went back to his Convent.

When his term of office as Prior was ended, he was made Master of Novices and set himself with the utmost vigilance and fervour to train the young souls committed to his charge. It pleased the Divine Majesty to perfect His servant by subjecting him to many grievous bodily infirmities, which he looked upon in the light of heavenly favours. When allowed some respite from his sufferings, he would lovingly complain of it to God; and, being once asked why he grieved at the cessation of his pains, he replied, "Because when I am not in pain it seems to me that God is withdrawing His hand from me." As he lay on his death-bed he began to recite the 120th Psalm, and on coming to the last verse, "May the Lord preserve thy going in and thy coming out, from henceforth, now, and evermore," he repeated the words three times, and then happily departed to our Lord on March 7, A.D. 1452. He was beatified by Pius VI., A.D. 1784.

Prayer

O God, who by the prayers and exhortations of Blessed Peter, Thy Confessor, didst mercifully cause many wanderers to return to the path of righteousness,

March 10 enlarge our hearts, we beseech Thee, through his holy intercession, that we may ever run in the way of Thy commandments. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH 18

Blessed Sibyllina Biscossi, Virgin

(A.D. 1287-1367)

March 18 SIBYLLINA BISCOSSI was born at Pavia, in Italy, of devout and respectable parents, A.D. 1287, and from her infancy was noted for her spirit of piety and prayer. She was left an orphan at an early age, and when she was only twelve years old a severe illness entirely deprived her of sight. Some charitable Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Dominic took charge of the afflicted child and clothed her in their habit. Her blindness was a heavy trial to Sibyllina, and for many months she earnestly besought the Holy Patriarch who had adopted her as his child to obtain for her from God the restoration of her sight. When at length Saint Dominic's feast came round she confidently hoped to obtain the grant of her petition. But the day wore on and still her prayer remained unanswered. At length the Saint appeared to her, and, taking her by the hand, led her on a mysterious journey. Their road at first lay through the midst of narrow and darksome places, the sight of which filled Sibyllina's soul with horror. Then her heavenly guide conducted her through regions of unutterable beauty, all flooded with celestial light. We are not told whether or no the Holy Patriarch spoke to Sibyllina on this occasion, but on returning to herself she no longer felt the slightest wish to be cured of her blindness, which she understood to be figured by the

first part of her vision, and which she trusted would be the means of bringing her to the enjoyment of never-ending happiness. Accepting with her whole heart the cross which had been laid upon her, she now began to devote herself with greater fervour than ever to the Divine service and specially to meditation on the Passion. March 18

When she was sufficiently instructed in the exercises of the spiritual life, she left the Community of Tertiaries to which she had hitherto belonged, and began at the age of fifteen to lead the life of a recluse in a little cell adjoining the Church of the Friars Preachers, where she spent the remaining sixty-four years of her earthly pilgrimage, leaving it only twice during the whole of this period, and then under obedience. For seven years she practised the most terrific austerities, which she was at length obliged in some degree to moderate. Then God made known to her those secrets of contemplation and of interior mortification of the will, which are of higher value than any bodily exercises. She was favoured with many heavenly visions and revelations. Penetrated with a lively devotion to the Holy Ghost, she always prepared with the utmost fervour for the Feast of Pentecost, on which day she was wont to receive singular graces. In her zeal for the conversion of souls she showed herself a true daughter of Saint Dominic and she was far from allowing either her blindness or her solitary life to interfere with her discharge of charitable offices to her neighbour. A small window opened from her cell, through which she received her daily portion of food and communicated with those who sought her counsels. Uneducated as she was, she nevertheless spoke of Divine things with such fluency, unction, and theological precision that she might have been supposed to be familiar with the Soliloquies of Saint

March 18 Augustine and the Meditations of Saint Bernard. Great numbers of sinners were converted by her prayers and pious exhortations.

Blessed Sibyllina possessed a singular gift of spiritual discernment and on one occasion warned a priest who was carrying the Viaticum to the sick that the host he bore was not consecrated, which proved on inquiry to be the case. The sensible sweetness which she always felt in the nearness of the Blessed Sacrament served to warn her of the moment of consecration whenever a priest celebrated Mass in the church adjoining her cell or bore the Blessed Sacrament past her window to the sick.

This holy and afflicted servant of God departed to her Spouse on Friday, March 19, 1367, being in the eightieth year of her age. Many extraordinary graces having been obtained through her intercession, she was beatified by Pius IX. Her body was found incorrupt when her tomb was opened in the year 1853. She is held in special veneration by servants, in consequence of a tradition that she had lived in domestic service, doubtless in her childhood, and a pious Confraternity of servants is established in Pavia under her patronage.

Prayer

O God, who didst enlighten Blessed Sibyllina, Thy Virgin, when deprived of corporal sight, with admirable clearness of spiritual vision, grant us that, by her intercession, we may despise the glory of this world and earnestly seek after that which is eternal. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH 22

Blessed Ambrose Sansedonio, Confessor

(A.D. 1220-1286)

AMBROSE was born of noble parents at Siena, in **March 22** Tuscany, on April 16, A.D. 1220. His mother, who had experienced extraordinary interior consolation whilst expecting his birth, was filled with bitter grief on finding the infant deformed and hideous. Unable to bear the painful sight, she sent him away to be brought up by strangers. One day, as his nurse was holding him in her arms at her cottage door, a venerable pilgrim passed by and gazed fixedly upon him, whereupon she veiled his face to conceal his ugliness. But the stranger, obeying a divine inspiration, said to her, "Woman, hide not the face of that child; he will one day be the light and glory of this city." So the nurse took courage and every day when she went to pray in the church of the newly founded Friars Preachers, she took the child with her, his face still veiled. He always testified extreme reluctance to leave a certain altar in this church, on which some precious relics were preserved. One day, when the cries and tears of the infant had induced his nurse to carry him back to his favourite altar before returning home, he suddenly stretched out his little arms and legs, which until now had been distorted and motionless, raised his hands to heaven, and pronounced three times in a loud and distinct tone the holy name of Jesus. The blackened and disfigured countenance was now found to be radiant with beauty, every trace of deformity was gone for ever.

March 22 The after-childhood of Ambrose was distinguished by a holiness beyond his years. Every day he recited the Office of our Blessed Lady and would rise by night to meditate when only seven years old. He was accustomed to visit and relieve the sick in the hospitals and prisoners in their dungeons. His love for the poor was very great, and he obtained his father's permission to bring home and lodge five needy pilgrims every Saturday. This act of charity was rewarded even in this life, for five angels appeared to the boy one night, singing sweet harmonies, and said to him, "Ambrose, we are the five pilgrims whom thou hast been wont to entertain for the love of God." In spite of the allurements of the world, the earnest entreaties of his family, and the open assaults of Satan, he very early resolved to embrace the religious life, and received the Dominican habit on his seventeenth birthday, humbly kissing the feet of all the Brethren before being admitted into their number.

Some time after his profession, Ambrose was sent to Paris to study under Blessed Albert the Great, and here he had Saint Thomas Aquinas as a fellow-disciple. When Blessed Albert returned to Cologne in the year 1248, he took his two holy pupils back with him to teach under his supervision. Although Blessed Ambrose, from motives of humility, never took his Doctor's degree, yet he was a renowned Lector and taught with great edification during thirty years in various Convents of his Order. At the same time he did not neglect the duty of preaching, especially in vacation-time; and his powerful eloquence converted many sinners and contributed not a little to re-establish peace in Italy, then torn by intestine quarrels and the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. He was held in great esteem by successive Popes, who

repeatedly employed him in important missions of peace, in reconciling heretics to the Church, and in preaching the Crusade in various parts of Europe. They were anxious to signify their appreciation of his singular services by raising him to the episcopate, but humility was ever his most characteristic virtue, and he steadily refused every offer of promotion. His example gave weight to his words. It was his inviolable custom never to go to the altar to offer the Holy Sacrifice until he had first asked pardon of any whom he believed to be irritated against him, and his perfect sweetness and humility under trying circumstances had power to soften the hardest hearts. One of his special devotions was to pray for those who were about to enter the married state, that God would bless their union and grant them all the graces needful for their salvation. Hence, after his death, it became a custom for the maidens of Siena to offer a wax candle at his tomb to obtain a blessing on their marriage.

His interior life was one of almost uninterrupted prayer. Many a time were the angels seen present when he celebrated Mass, which he seldom did without ecstasies. Often, when he preached, his body was miraculously raised from the ground and his head was seen surrounded by a circle, not of glory, but of birds of various and brilliant plumage; and in the midst of this new and beautiful nimbus a face of wondrous majesty would sometimes appear, looking down upon Ambrose with a glance of unutterable love, and a hand which seemed to hold the universe in its grasp would be outstretched in benediction over his head. We are indebted for these particulars to a holy penitent of his, Nera Tolomei, to whom Our Lord also revealed that He appeared to Blessed Ambrose shortly before his death and said to him, "If thou desirest to remain in this life, thou shalt send many souls to heaven by thy

March 22 preaching; if, on the other hand, thou wouldst rather come to Me now, I will, in consideration of thy merits, release five thousand souls from Purgatory and admit them to glory together with thee." The holy man resigned himself entirely to the Divine will, adding, however, the words, "Nevertheless, I would willingly quit this world." Then the Divine Master bade the Saints, in whose honour Blessed Ambrose had so often preached, go forth to meet his happy soul; and Nera beheld him clothed in the pontifical robes which his humility had led him persistently to refuse on earth, and placed in the ranks of the Apostles, whose labours for souls he had striven to emulate. His happy death took place in the year 1286. Both in life and after death he was illustrious for miracles. His name was enrolled in the Roman Martyrology, A.D. 1597, and in the following century Pope Gregory XV. gave leave for his feast to be celebrated throughout the Dominican Order.

Prayer

May this glad Festival of Blessed Ambrose, Thy Confessor, give joy to Thy Church, O God, and may it ever be defended by all spiritual helps and made worthy to be blessed with everlasting joys. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 3

The Stigmata of Saint Catharine of Siena

(A.D. 1375)

April 3 AMONG the many supernatural privileges granted by Our Lord to His chosen spouse, Saint Catharine of Siena, one of the greatest was unquestionably the

impression of the sacred Stigmata. This mysterious **April 3** favour was granted to the Saint on the Fourth Sunday of Lent, April 1, A.D. 1375, in the little Church of Saint Christina at Pisa, to which city she had been sent by the Pope on an important embassy. Already, five years previously, whilst in her native city of Siena, Our Lord had vouchsafed to imprint on her the wound of the right hand, in token of having granted the prayer she had offered to Him on behalf of her Confessor, Father Thomas della Fonte, and others. This wound caused excruciating pain but was visible to no eyes except her own. We cannot better give the account of her reception of the five wounds than in her own words and those of Blessed Raymund of Capua, who had by that time become her Confessor. He had celebrated Mass and administered Holy Communion to the Saint and her companions, after which, as was usual with her, Catharine remained a long time in ecstasy. "We waited," says Blessed Raymund, "until she should recover her senses, hoping to receive some spiritual consolation from her ; when suddenly we beheld her, who until then had been lying prostrate on the ground, rise a little, then kneel and extend her hands and arms. Her countenance appeared all on fire, and thus she remained for a long time perfectly motionless. Then, as though she had received a deadly wound, we saw her fall suddenly and a few moments later she came to herself. She immediately sent for me and said to me in a low tone, 'Father, I have to make known to you that, by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, I now bear His Sacred Stigmata in my body.' I replied that I had guessed as much from what I had observed during her ecstasy and asked her in what manner it had come to pass. She replied, saying, 'I beheld Our Lord fastened to His Cross coming down towards me, surrounded by a great and

April 3 wonderful light. Then my soul was all ravished with the desire to go forth and meet its Creator; so that by the very force of my spirit, as you might see, my body was constrained to rise. Then there came down from the holes of His Blessed Wounds five rays as though of blood, which were directed towards the same parts of my body, namely, my hands, feet, and heart. I understood the mystery and cried out, saying, 'Ah! Lord God, I beseech Thee, let no signs of these holy marks appear outwardly to the eyes of men!' And, whilst I was yet speaking, those rays, that were before of a sanguine red, changed to a marvellous brightness; and so in the form of most pure light they rested upon those five parts of my body.' Then I asked her if no beam of light had reached her right side. She replied, 'No; it fell on the left side, and directly above the heart; for the ray of light that came from the right side of Our Lord did not strike me obliquely but directly.' Then I inquired if she felt any sensible pain in those places; on which, sighing deeply, she answered, 'I feel in those five places, but specially in my heart, so great and violent a pain, that, unless Almighty God be pleased to work a new miracle, I cannot live.'"

Blessed Raymund goes on to tell how he and her other disciples united in prayer that their spiritual Mother might be spared to them and how they implored her to join her prayers with theirs for this intention, and how, on the following Sunday, after the Saint had received Holy Communion, she regained strength and vigour.

During the lifetime of Saint Catharine the stigmata remained invisible, but after her death they were seen by several persons; and in the centre of the palm of her hand, now preserved as a sacred relic in the Convent of SS. Domenico e Sisto in Rome, there is an

appearance as though all the substance of the hand under the skin had in that part been pierced or removed; so that, when a lighted candle is placed behind it, a spot of light becomes distinctly visible, shining as it were through the thin integument. **April 3**

The Office of the Stigmata of Saint Catharine was first granted by Pope Benedict XIII. to the whole Order of Saint Dominic, and afterwards, at the request of the Dukes of Tuscany, was extended to every part of their dominions.

From the fact that April thus opens and closes with festivals of Saint Catharine, the custom has arisen amongst her clients of dedicating the whole month in a special manner to her by daily devotions in her honour.

Prayer

(As on the Feast of the Translation, p. 56.)

APRIL 5

Saint Vincent Ferrer, Confessor

(A.D. 1346-1419)

THIS great ornament of the Dominican Order was born about the year 1346 at Valentia in Spain, of pious and well-to-do parents. Even before his birth wonderful signs presaged his future sanctity; and, after a childhood of singular holiness, he took the habit of a Friar Preacher when entering on his eighteenth year. During the years of study and teaching which followed his profession, he doubtless practised the lesson he so beautifully gives to others in his "Treatise on the Spiritual Life," a book which in its day enjoyed as great a popularity as the "Imi- **April 5**

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April 5 tation of Christ" and the "Spiritual Combat" in our own times. "When you are reading or studying, you should often turn to our Lord to converse with Him, and to ask Him to give you understanding. . . . Hide yourself in the Wounds of Jesus and then resume your reading."

Never, perhaps, had Europe stood in such need of being evangelized by a Saint as during the latter half of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century. Two terrible scourges, each bringing countless evils in its train, were desolating the Church and the world. One was the awful pestilence known as the Black Death, which is said to have carried off one third of the human race; the other was the Great Schism, during which sometimes as many as three rival Popes divided the allegiance of Christendom. It was by no means easy at the time to know which election had been valid; and, whilst England remained faithful to the true Pope, France and Spain, probably in perfect good faith, supported the Anti-Pope, who had established himself at Avignon. Saint Vincent Ferrer was for some time Confessor to the Anti-Pope, Peter de Luna (Benedict XIII.). The anxieties of this office caused the Saint a severe illness, but our Lord appeared to him and cured him, at the same time bidding him quit the Pontifical Court and go forth to preach throughout the length and breadth of France and Spain the approach of the Last Judgment. With extreme difficulty the Saint at length obtained from Benedict permission to obey the command, and entered upon his commission with ample powers as Legate of the Apostolic See. The Divine Head of the Church, who was thus providing for her needs in her hour of trial, endowed this messenger with miraculous gifts almost unparalleled in history.

The remaining twenty years of Saint Vincent's life

April 5

were spent in evangelizing the countries which our Lord had assigned to him as his field of labour. He also preached in Savoy and Italy. In Christian art he is depicted with wings, in allusion to the passage in the Apocalypse relating to the "angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal gospel, to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue and people," bidding them "fear the Lord, and give Him honour, because the hour of His judgment is come." For the common theme of Saint Vincent's preaching was to exhort men to prepare for the coming of the Judge.

A large multitude of people was accustomed to accompany the Saint from place to place, the number amounting to many thousands. These often followed him either simply from devotion and to have the advantage of his daily sermon, or they were penitents, great sinners converted by him and anxious to atone for their past life. It was calculated that more than 100,000 persons, who were considered hopelessly obstinate in an openly wicked life, were brought to sincere and lasting repentance by the preaching of Saint Vincent. Wherever he appeared, heresy was put to flight, enemies were reconciled, and deadly feuds extinguished. God was pleased by his means to convert 25,000 Jews and 8000 Moors in various parts of Spain. By his persuasion a large number of churches, monasteries, and hospitals were erected in various places and he also caused many bridges to be built over rivers for the benefit of the people. He loved to collect children around him and would teach them how to make the sign of the cross and to say the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Creed, instructing them in the simplest words how to show their love for God, to obey their parents, and to do good to others. He is regarded in Spain as the special patron of

April 5 orphans and was the founder of some celebrated orphanages, which were placed under the care of Dominican Tertiaries.

After his daily sermon, Saint Vincent, to satisfy the devotion of the people, was obliged to allow them to kiss his hand in token of reverence and to bring the sick that he might lay his hand upon them with prayer. An immense multitude, whose number is known only to God, were thus perfectly cured of every kind of disease. On more than one occasion he raised the dead to life and he may be considered the great Thaumaturgus of the Dominican Order. In the midst of these astonishing signs of the Divine power working through him, Saint Vincent's humility remained ever his most distinguishing virtue. To a Franciscan friend, who, in the midst of a public ovation, said to him, "Brother Vincent, how is pride now?" the Saint replied with a smile, "It comes and it goes, Brother, but it never stays;" and no one was ever more sincere in acknowledging himself an unprofitable servant.

Worn out with age and labour, Saint Vincent was attacked by his last illness at Vannes, in Brittany, and happily departed to our Lord on Wednesday, April 5, A.D. 1419, at the age of seventy-three. He was canonized by Pope Callixtus III. in the year 1455.

Prayer

O God, who didst draw to the knowledge of Thy Name a multitude of the nations by the admirable preaching of Blessed Vincent, Thy Confessor, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be found worthy to have Him as our Rewarder in heaven whom he announced on earth as the Judge to come, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

APRIL 9

Blessed Anthony Pavone, Martyr

(A.D. 1326-1374)

BLESSED ANTHONY was born about the year 1326 April 9 of the noble Piedmontese family of the Pavoni. His father was at the head of a school of music; he also held some important municipal offices in the town of Savigliano. After a childhood of great promise, Anthony, at the age of fifteen, received the Dominican habit. His extraordinary learning, his eloquence, his practical talents for government, and, most of all, the sanctity of his life, caused him to be raised to important offices; and, after the martyrdom of Blessed Peter Ruffia, he was appointed his successor as Inquisitor-General in Piedmont, Upper Lombardy, and the Genoese territory, then much infected by the Waldensian heresy. Being made Prior of Savigliano in the year 1368, he undertook the rebuilding of his Convent on so noble a scale that Provincial Chapters, and even a General Chapter, were subsequently held there.

The indefatigable labours of Blessed Anthony for the conversion of the heretics rendered him an object of hatred in their eyes, and they determined to rid themselves of so formidable an enemy. The holy man had long prayed that the grace of martyrdom might be vouchsafed to him, and God revealed to him the day and hour of his death. Transported with joy, he thenceforth had continually on his lips the words of the Psalmist, "I have rejoiced at the things that are said unto me; we will go into the house of the Lord." Regardless of the threats of the heretics, he persevered

April 9 with renewed zeal in his apostolic labours, patiently awaiting the accomplishment of the Divine will.

On the eve of his death, he went, radiant with joy, to a barber of Bricherasio, in which town he was then preaching, and bade him shave him well, "for," said he, "I am invited to a wedding." "That cannot be," replied the man; "all the news of the town comes to my shop, and if a wedding had been in preparation, I should certainly have heard of it." "Believe me," answered Blessed Anthony, "I am telling you the truth."

The following day, being Low Sunday, April 9, A.D. 1374, after a night spent in prayer, the holy man for the last time offered the Holy Sacrifice and preached in refutation of the Waldensian errors. On leaving the church after his thanksgiving, he was attacked by seven armed men, who inflicted many wounds on him and finally hacked his body to pieces, in presence of the weeping multitude, who had not the courage to stop the brutal deed. The sacred remains were brought to the Convent at Savigliano and many miracles were worked at the Martyr's tomb.

Like his namesake, the glorious Saint Anthony of Padua, Blessed Anthony Pavone, as the Lessons of his Office in the Dominican Breviary testify, is invoked by the faithful specially for the recovery of things lost. A gentleman of the name of Brian Taparelli, having mislaid a legal document, for lack of which he was exposed to the danger of imprisonment and almost total ruin, made a vow to the holy Martyr, promising to offer a candle of fifty pounds' weight at his tomb if he recovered the deed. The following night, Blessed Anthony appeared to him in his sleep and told him where he would find the missing document.

In the year 1468, Blessed Aimò Taparelli, a kinsman of the gentleman just mentioned, having a great devo-

tion to Blessed Anthony, caused his holy relics to be solemnly translated to a more worthy resting-place. April 9

Pius IX. raised both these holy men to the altars of the Church.

Prayer

O God, who, to promote the unity of the faith, didst endow Blessed Anthony, Thy Martyr, with invincible fortitude of soul, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so follow in his footsteps as to attain the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 10

Blessed Anthony Neyrot, Martyr

(A.D. 1460)

BLESSED ANTHONY NEYROT was a native of Rivoli, April 10
in Piedmont, and took the habit of a Friar Preacher in the celebrated Convent of Saint Mark at Florence whilst Saint Antoninus was Prior, being the last who was there clothed and professed under his government. He was naturally of a weak and unstable character; and his vanity having been flattered by some success in the pulpit, he became desirous of displaying his powers elsewhere. In spite of the touching entreaties and prophetic warnings of Saint Antoninus, who threatened him with terrible misfortunes both for soul and body if he persisted in his purpose, he obtained permission from the Superiors of the Order to go to Sicily and afterwards to Naples. At that time the Mediterranean was much infested by pirates. Anthony fell into their hands and was carried captive to Tunis. As long as he was detained in prison, he conducted himself on the whole as a good religious,

April 10 though a Jeromite Father who used to visit him remarked that he was somewhat deficient in patience and resignation. After a time, through the intervention of the Genoese Consul, Anthony was released from prison but was detained in Tunis until his entire ransom should be paid. During this interval he was exposed to violent temptations, to which he miserably yielded, publicly renouncing his faith in presence of the king and all his court. In reward for his apostasy he was restored to full liberty. The unhappy man then contracted a sacrilegious marriage and began to devote himself to the study of the Koran. But the detestable principles of the book, which he ceased not to contrast with the purity and sanctity of the Gospel, filled him with unspeakable disgust. During four months he remained thus plunged in the mire of sin. At the end of that time God was pleased to manifest His mercy in a marvellous manner by recalling the wanderer to the fold.

It chanced one day that Anthony fell in with some merchants recently arrived from Italy, from whom he learned the news of the death of his former spiritual father, Saint Antoninus, and of the many miracles worked at his tomb. With bitter remorse he recalled to mind the advice and the warnings which he had so undutifully neglected, and with all his heart he implored the Saint to have pity on his misery. The holy Archbishop immediately appeared to him in vision, reproved him for his crimes, and exhorted him to repentance. "Father," exclaimed the poor apostate, "I have sinned against Heaven and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy son." With a look of ineffable love and compassion the Saint revived his courage and confidence, and from that moment Anthony became a true penitent.

In order the better to repair the scandal he had

April 10

given, he resolved to make his abjuration as public as his apostasy had been. He therefore awaited the day when the king was to make a solemn entrance into the city. During the intervening six months he prepared himself in secret by prayer and penance, and in particular by the fervent recitation of the Holy Rosary, for the combat which lay before him.

At length, on Palm Sunday, A.D. 1460, he received the Sacraments of the Church, was once more clothed in the Dominican habit, renewed his religious tonsure, and made a brief sermon to the faithful, in which he expressed his detestation of his former errors and his firm belief in the doctrines of Christianity. Then, full of courage, he went forth to meet the king, openly professed himself a follower of Christ, and expressed his grief for his miserable apostasy and his present readiness to give his life for the faith. The tyrant at first endeavoured to win him back to Mahometanism by honeyed words and promises, but these proved of no avail. On the contrary, the confessor of Christ began boldly to preach the faith and to exhort his hearers to embrace it. Enraged at his constancy, the king ordered that he should be cast into prison. On the way thither, his conductors vied with one another in loading him with insults and cruel torments, in the midst of which he ceased not to call on the name of Jesus. The Christians in Tunis, on hearing of his imprisonment, hastened to send him food and clothing; but he distributed it all to the poor, contenting himself with bread and water for his own nourishment.

On Maundy Thursday he was brought out to judgment. Every effort was made to overcome his constancy by promises, threats, and torments; but the more he was ill-treated, so much the more fervently did he pray and forgive his tormentors from his heart. At length sentence was passed and he was led out

April 10 to execution. After kneeling for a few moments in fervent prayer, he stood erect, and, as it were, ravished in God. Motionless, though unfettered, and without uttering a groan or a cry, he bore the sword strokes and the showers of stones aimed against him, until at length he fell to the ground and yielded up his soul to God. The barbarous executioners endeavoured to burn the Martyr's body, but it remained unscathed in the midst of the flames. They then threw it into a sewer, whence it was rescued by the Genoese, and when washed was found to exhale a sweet perfume. Many miracles were worked by Blessed Anthony's intercession and his sacred remains were removed in the year 1469 to his native town of Rivoli, where he is still held in great veneration. He was beatified by Pope Clement XIII.

Prayer

O God, who didst mercifully bring back Blessed Anthony to the light of Thy holy truth, making him a glorious martyr of the same, grant, through his intercession, that we may ever be steadfast in faith and effectual in the performance of good works. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 13

Blessed Margaret of Castello, Virgin

(A.D. 1287-1320)

April 13 BLESSED MARGARET was born at Metola, on the borders of Tuscany and Umbria, in A.D. 1287. Her parents were of noble family but had been reduced to extreme poverty by political disasters. To their great grief, their child was born blind; and, as no medical

skill availed to give her sight, they took her, when still quite young, to the tomb of a holy Franciscan lay-brother, Jacopo by name, who was buried at Tiferno, now called Città-di-Castello, and who was renowned for many miracles. But God, who had sent this blindness for the spiritual perfection and enlightenment of His servant, was not pleased to grant their request; and the unnatural parents, finding themselves disappointed, abandoned the child, whom they regarded as a burden, under the portico of the church and returned home without her.

The little one, feeling herself thus cast away, had recourse to the God whom she had constantly and lovingly served ever since she had attained the use of reason. She lived an object of charity for some time. Kind-hearted persons would take her in for a night or two and then pass her on to a neighbour. Wherever she went, she left such a conviction of her holiness and of the great interior gifts which adorned her soul, that soon every one was full of the saintliness of the little blind girl of Metola. These reports reaching the Convent of Saint Margaret, the nuns offered her an asylum. But her trials were not yet ended. Her benefactresses, religious only in name, finding the prayers, austerities, and heavenly virtues of their new guest a silent but constant reproach to their own worldly and self-indulgent habits, loaded her with abuse and ill-treatment, called her a hypocrite and other evil names, and at length drove her from their doors.

An honest and virtuous couple, who knew her history and pitied her situation, took her into their house, where she lived as one of the family to the day of her death. Whilst with these new parents, she became a member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic. Though blind, she knew by heart the entire Psalter,

April 13

April 13 which, in addition to the daily recitation of the Office of the Blessed Virgin and of the Cross, was her habitual prayer. She used to explain the mysteries contained in the Psalms and to develop the hidden sense of their inspired words in a marvellous manner; and, though never taught at any human school, she possessed a perfect and infused knowledge of Latin and of other branches of knowledge, so that, when the children of the house came back from school, she would hear their lessons and correct their exercises.

Blessed Margaret devoted many hours of the day and great part of the night to prayer and contemplation. It pleased God to subject her to severe interior sufferings, strong natural repugnances, and aridity of soul, and the devil was permitted to assault her with violent and grievous temptations; but at each fresh trial she made it her one endeavour to bring her will into perfect conformity to the will of God, and by her disinterestedness in the Divine service merited that her life should become an almost continual ecstasy. If she set herself to pray or heard any discourse on spiritual subjects, she almost invariably fell into rapture, and was often seen suspended in the air, without support, for many hours together. She had not only learnt patience in the school of suffering, but also a great compassion for others. Yet, with this sweetness and gentle charity for all who needed it, she combined severe austerity towards her own innocent flesh, which was only discovered when, after her death, her body was found all torn and mangled by instruments of penance. Poor and afflicted as she was, she had no other means of testifying her gratitude towards her benefactors than by her prayers; and three times our Lord rewarded these with miraculous answers on their behalf.

At length she happily departed to her Heavenly

Spouse, on April 13, A.D. 1320, fortified by the Holy Sacraments of the Church, being in the thirty-third year of her age. She was buried with great honour in the Dominican church, where a multitude of miracles bore witness to the sanctity of this humble and afflicted servant of God. A few days after her funeral, the Friars called to mind that she had often been accustomed to say, "Oh, if you did but know what I have in my heart!" With the permission of the ecclesiastical authorities, therefore, they subjected the heart, which had been extracted from the body before the interment, to a medical examination. At the first incision there issued from it three shining and polished balls, resembling three pearls artistically carved. On one of them was represented a majestic queen, apparently the Holy Mother of God, to whom Blessed Margaret had been specially devoted; the second bore the effigy of the infant Jesus lying in the manger between the ox and the ass; on the third were to be seen a venerable old man, supposed to be Saint Joseph, a Dominican Tertiary, and a dove.

Blessed Margaret's body remains even to our own times in a state of perfect preservation, and she is held in great honour in her own country. She was beatified by Paul V.

Prayer

O God, who wast pleased that Thy Holy Virgin, the Blessed Margaret, should be born blind, so that the eye of her heart being enlightened, she might continually contemplate Thee alone, be Thou the light of our eyes, that we may have no part in the darkness of this world, but be enabled to reach the land of eternal brightness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 14

**Blessed Peter Gonzalez, commonly called Saint
Celmo, Confessor, Patron of Sailors**

(A.D. 1180-1246)

April 14 BLESSED PETER GONZALEZ was born at Fromista in Spain, of noble and opulent parents, A.D. 1180, and pursued his studies in the University of Palencia, then recently sanctified by the presence of Saint Dominic. He embraced the ecclesiastical state and was early raised to the dignity of Provost of the Chapter of Palencia, of which see his uncle was then Bishop. In spite of the holiness of his calling, Peter's early life was spent in worldliness and dissipation; an apparently trifling accident determined his vocation to the religious state. One Christmas Day, as he was riding through the streets magnificently apparelled and escorted by a brilliant retinue, he was thrown from his horse into a heap of filth. This disgrace, as he seems to have felt it, disgusted him with the world; he immediately resigned his rich benefices, and asked and obtained the Dominican habit. The grace of God had transformed him into a new man; and his learning, zeal, and sanctity soon fitted him for the labours of the apostolate, which he exercised during the remainder of his life, preaching with wonderful success in various parts of Spain. His fame as a confessor was very great; he was always ready to receive penitents and possessed in an extraordinary degree the gift of moving them to contrition and amendment.

Ferdinand III., the saintly King of Castile, who was about to undertake the expulsion of the Moors

from his dominions, entreated Blessed Peter to accompany him, in order to restrain the vices of the soldiers. The holy man exercised over the army an extraordinary influence for good, so that the Moors were filled with a strange feeling of terror when they beheld him passing from rank to rank; whilst the constancy and heroism which he displayed in the midst of the temptations and snares with which wicked men continually sought to compass his ruin, spread the fame of his sanctity far and wide. The miracles worked by this holy servant of God were very numerous. At his suggestion and under his superintendence, a splendid bridge was built across the Minho at a spot where the crossing of the river was specially dangerous. Provisions failed the workmen, whereupon Blessed Peter went to the river-bank, and the fish presented themselves of their own accord and suffered him and his companions to catch as many as they wanted, after which he dismissed the remainder with his blessing. When he was one day preaching to a great multitude at Bayona, close to another bridge which was in course of erection in consequence of his industry and exertions, a terrific thunderstorm came on and his listeners prepared to disperse. "Fear not," exclaimed the Saint; "He whom the winds and sea and earth obey will not allow the storm to harm you." So saying, he stretched forth his arm and commanded the clouds to separate. The sky immediately above his audience instantly became clear and the holy man continued his sermon, whilst torrents of rain descended on either side at a distance of only a few paces. On another occasion, some sailors in danger of shipwreck called upon him for help and forthwith he appeared in their midst and calmed the tempest. This last-mentioned miracle, which happened whilst the Saint was still alive, has

April 14

April 14 been oftentimes repeated since his death; in consequence of which he is universally invoked by the seafaring populations of Catholic Europe and America, usually under the name of Saint Telmo, and many petitions have been presented to the Holy See that the title of Patron of Sailors may be officially granted to him.

Blessed Peter died and was buried at Tuy, where he had been preaching the Holy Week, A.D. 1246. Innumerable miracles have been worked at his tomb, whence a miraculous oil sometimes flows. He is the object of great veneration in Southern Europe, and was beatified by Benedict XIV.

Prayer

O God, who affordest singular help through Blessed Peter to such as are in the dangers of the sea, grant, through his intercession, that in all the storms of this life the light of Thy grace may ever shine upon us, whereby we may be able to gain the port of eternal salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 17

Blessed Clara Gambacorti, Widow

(A.D. 1362-1419)

April 17 THORA GAMBACORTI was born of noble parents, A.D. 1362. When she was seven years old, her father, Peter Gambacorti, became Governor of Pisa, and, with a view to strengthening his power, betrothed her to a noble youth, by name Simon di Massa. But the little girl had already given her whole heart to a Heavenly Spouse, and whenever she prayed before a crucifix or saw the priest elevate the Sacred Host, she would

take the betrothal ring from her finger, saying, "My God! I will have no other Spouse than Thyself." She was, however, forced to submit to the nuptials, though she never saw her husband after her betrothal, as he went to serve in foreign wars, and died A.D. 1377, without returning to Pisa. She thus found herself delivered from ties in which she had been engaged against her will. Her parents lost no time in proposing a second marriage; but, encouraged by the letters of Saint Catharine of Siena, with whom she had contracted an intimate friendship on occasion of the Saint's visit to Pisa two years previously, Thora answered them by cutting off her beautiful hair and giving all she possessed to the poor. Then, laying aside her rich garments, she clothed herself in a rough penitential garb, and at length found means of entering the Convent of the Poor Clares, where she exchanged her baptismal name of Thora for that of Clara. She was not, however, permitted to remain long in her new retreat; her brother, at the head of an armed force, dragged her from it and brought her home, where she was confined for five months in the closest imprisonment. She was often kept without food for days together and was not even allowed to hear Mass, until at length, on the Feast of Saint Dominic, her sister-in-law took her to the Dominican church; and on her return God was pleased to reveal to her in prayer that He had called her to serve Him, not in the Franciscan, but in the Dominican Order.

She finally overcame the resistance of her family by her patience and entered the Dominican Convent of the Holy Cross, outside the city. Though a good spirit reigned in the house, yet poverty was not strictly observed. Only seven of the Community, including Clara, lived without possessing anything of their own. One of these was, like herself, a disciple of Saint

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April 17 Catharine, a widow, and afterwards to be raised to the altars of the church, Blessed Maria Mancini. After four years, Blessed Clara and Blessed Maria, with three companions, removed to a Convent dedicated to Saint Dominic, built for them by Peter Gambacorti, where strict religious observance was established. Of this Convent Clara was soon elected Prioress, and from it went forth those who reformed the communities of Genoa, Parma, and Venice. Moreover, by her prayers and counsels she greatly promoted the cause of reform even among the Friars themselves, so that the Dominican Order with reason regards Blessed Clara as another Saint Teresa.

The holy and austere life led by her and her companions obtained for their house the reputation of being inhabited, not by women, but by angels; and Our Lord was pleased to reward it by a miraculous token of His favour. One day a pious nobleman of Siena, by name Count Galeazzo, whilst praying before a crucifix which hung on the walls of a half-ruined church in that city, heard a voice proceeding from the sacred image, saying, "Carry me to the Convent of Saint Dominic at Pisa; there I shall be treated with devotion." The Count obeyed; and, as he approached the Convent, Blessed Clara was supernaturally warned to go to the enclosure door to meet her Spouse, who was coming to dwell with her. She received the sacred deposit with the utmost devotion and caused it to be placed over the high altar.

Though her Community was strictly enclosed, Blessed Clara found means to extend her influence far beyond the limits of her Convent walls. The poor were never suffered to leave her door unrelieved; she, moreover employed a number of out-Sisters who visited the hospitals and prisons, acting entirely under her direction, and she renounced in favour of an insti-

April 17

tution for foundlings a considerable property which had been bequeathed to her. Like her friend, Saint Catharine, she was regarded in the light of their spiritual mother by many of the Friars of her Order, as well as by a number of persons living in the world whom she guided and encouraged in the path of perfection by her wise counsels and letters. Her charity specially manifested itself in sublime acts of forgiveness. A conspiracy was formed against her father, at the head of which was one whom he had treated as his bosom friend, a factious nobleman, named James Appiano. In the tumult which ensued the greater number of the Gambacorti family were cruelly assassinated. One of Blessed Clara's brothers fled to her for protection, but not even to save his life did she feel herself justified in breaking the law of enclosure and risking the entrance of the mob into the Convent ; and he was slain at the door. In the severe illness which was the result of this heroic act, she placed herself with touching humility and delicacy under a trifling obligation to the Appiani family, in token of forgiveness ; and when, by a just retribution, they in their turn were hurled from power and the head of the house met the death which his treachery had deserved, she sent for his widow and daughters and gave them a safe asylum within her Convent walls.

Blessed Clara died A.D. 1419, at the age of fifty-seven. When the Sisters, according to the custom of the Order, were reciting the Psalter by her bier, they found themselves mysteriously forced to substitute the *Gloria Patri* for the *Requiem æternam* at the end of each Psalm, in spite of their endeavours to conform to the rubric. Many miracles and signal graces have been obtained through the intercession of Blessed Clara, and she was beatified by Pius VIII.

Prayer

April 17 Grant us, O merciful God, the spirit of prayer and penance, that, following in the footsteps of Blessed Clara, we may be worthy to gain the crown which she hath received in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 20

Saint Agnes of Monte Pulciano, Virgin

(A.D. 1268-1317)

April 20 SAINT AGNES was born of virtuous parents in the neighbourhood of Monte Pulciano, in Tuscany, about the year 1268. Extraordinary signs and a piety far beyond her years presaged what this child was one day to become. Whilst still very young, she succeeded in extorting from her parents permission to enter an exceedingly austere Monastery. After a few years she was sent to assist in the foundation of another Monastery for the education of young girls at Procena, of which she became Abbess, in virtue of a special dispensation from the Holy See, when only fifteen. She led a life of continual prayer and rigid penance; and God vouchsafed to show how pleasing she was in His sight by many signs and wonders. Flowers of exquisite fragrance and beauty would spring up on the spot where she had prayed; showers of manna, in the shape of little white crosses, would fall upon her in the presence of a crowd of witnesses; she was favoured by frequent visions, and ten times received Holy Communion from an angel's hand. So great was the poverty of her Monastery that money and provisions often failed; in these circumstances the wants of the Community were sometimes supplied by miracle.

April 20

After seventeen years spent at Procena, the inhabitants of Monte Pulciano entreated Saint Agnes to come and found a Convent within their walls. She had recourse to prayer in order to ascertain the will of God, and, as she prayed, a wonderful vision was granted her. She seemed to herself to be standing on the sea-shore, and three large and splendidly equipped boats floated on the waters before her. In one of these stood Saint Augustine, Saint Francis was in another, whilst on the prow of the third she beheld Saint Dominic. Each of the three Saints pressingly invited her to his boat, specially Saint Francis, who alleged the resemblance of the habit she then wore with that of his daughters, the Poor Clares. After a long dispute, Saint Dominic said to his two companions, "It will not be as you desire; the Lord has disposed that Agnes should embark on my boat." So saying, he drew her on board, and immediately a heavenly messenger stood beside the Saint and made known to her that she was to establish a Community of virgins, as desired, at Monte Pulciano, on a hill which had hitherto been the resort of women of evil life, and that her daughters were to take the habit and follow the rule of Saint Dominic.

This was accordingly done, and the Saint governed the new Community with the same wisdom and sweetness with which she had formerly ruled at Procena, and was favoured with the like demonstrations of God's watchful providence. Whilst still at Procena, Our Lady one day appeared to her and placed the Divine Infant in her arms. Before restoring Him to His Mother, the Saint had possessed herself of a little cross which was suspended from His neck by a slender thread. This treasure she had left behind her on coming to Monte Pulciano, and she now wrote to claim it. The Community at Procena, who were in great

April 20 grief at losing their holy Abbess, absolutely refused to give up the cross; whereupon the Saint betook herself to prayer, and it was immediately brought to her by an angel.

When the end of her earthly pilgrimage drew near, Saint Agnes was granted a Divine warning of the sufferings which awaited her as a final purification before receiving her crown. One Sunday at break of day, as she was allowing herself a little rest after prayer, it seemed to her that an angel took her by the hand, and leading her under an olive-tree, as though to remind her of our Lord's agony in Gethsemane, presented her with a chalice containing an exceedingly bitter draught. "Drink this chalice, Spouse of Christ," said the angelic visitant; "the Lord Jesus drank it for thee." The servant of God eagerly obeyed for the love of her Divine Bridegroom; but, before she had drained the cup, the vision disappeared and she found herself once more in her cell. This vision was repeated on nine consecutive Sundays and shortly afterwards the Saint was attacked by the long and painful illness which brought her to the grave.

In compliance with the wishes of her Sisters, she sought relief by paying a long visit to some medicinal springs at a short distance from the Convent. Here our Lord was pleased to honour His faithful Spouse by many prodigies. A miraculous hot water spring gushed forth which afterwards bore her name and was found far more health-giving than any of the former springs. Finding she derived no benefit from the baths, the Saint returned to her Convent, which she had been very unwilling to quit. As she lay stretched on her bed of suffering, her spiritual children knelt around her, weeping over their approaching loss. "If you loved me," she said to them with a sweet smile, "you would rejoice, because I am about to enter into

the joy of my Spouse. Be not afflicted beyond measure at my departure hence; from heaven I shall not lose sight of you; I shall be your mother, your companion, and your sister whenever you call upon me in your wants." Her last words were, "I go to Him who is my only hope." Her holy and happy death, which was followed by many wonders, took place on the 20th of April, A.D. 1317. Her Life was written by Blessed Raymund of Capua, who became Confessor to the Community some fifty years after her death. Readers of the Life of Saint Catharine of Siena will be familiar with the wonders which accompanied the visit of that Saint to the tomb of Saint Agnes, and with the revelation made to her that they two were to enjoy a like glory in heaven. Saint Agnes was canonized by Benedict XIII., A.D. 1726. April 20

Prayer

O God, who wast oftentimes pleased to shed a heavenly dew over Thy Holy Virgin, Blessed Agnes, and to deck the places of her prayer with divers fresh-blown flowers, mercifully grant that we, through her prayers, may be sprinkled with the unfailing dew of Thy blessing, and made fit to receive the fruits of immortality. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 21

Blessed Bartholomew of Cerverio, Martyr

(A.D. 1420-1466)

IN the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Piedmont and other provinces of Northern Italy were overrun by heretics. The Order of Saint Dominic, true to its earliest traditions, sent forth a multitude of apostolic April 21

April 21 men to combat error and guard the faith in the infected regions, and many of them sealed their labours with their blood. The Convent of Savigliano alone produced four Inquisitors of the faith, namely, Blessed Peter Ruffia, Blessed Anthony Pavonio, Blessed Aimo Taparelli, and Blessed Bartholomew of Cerverio, who have all been raised to the altars of the Church, and three of whom received the martyr's crown.

Blessed Bartholomew, whose story we have now to tell, was born of noble parents at Savigliano about the year 1420, and at an early age entered the Dominican Order in the Convent of his native town. He was gifted with great talents and devoted himself with ardour to the pursuit of learning and sanctity. After having attained his Doctor's degree and taught in the University of Turin, he was elected Prior, an office which he held more than once, and in which he displayed considerable talent for business, as well as great zeal for the Divine worship.

Being made Inquisitor of the faith, he discharged the delicate and difficult duties of that office with the utmost prudence, patience, and intrepidity, to the great satisfaction of the faithful and the despair of the heretics. He knew that his life was in danger and kept himself in readiness for death. One day, having to go to Cerverio on business connected with his office, he prepared himself by making his confession, as though it were to be the last of his life, and said before his departure, "I am called Bartholomew of Cerverio and nevertheless I have never set foot in Cerverio. I am going thither to-day in quality of Inquisitor, and it is there I am to die." When he was within half-a-mile of his destination, five heretics, who had been lying in ambush, rushed upon him and his companions. The latter succeeded in effecting their escape, but Blessed Bartholomew made no attempt to

defend himself and fell pierced with wounds. This April 21 martyrdom took place on April 21, 1466.

That same day, at sunset, the inhabitants of Savigliano beheld a brilliant meteor, resembling the sun, rising in the direction of Cerverio, its rays converging on the spot where the martyr had fallen. A tree sprang up shortly afterwards on this same spot, the leaves and branches of which were impressed with a cross. The sacred remains of Blessed Bartholomew were carried to the church at Cerverio, to await the arrival of the Friars from Savigliano. As the Brethren crossed the threshold, the holy body, which hitherto had not shed a drop of blood, began to pour it forth in abundance. The remains were removed to Savigliano, where they were honoured by many miracles. On the suppression of that Convent in the troublous times which followed the French Revolution, the inhabitants of Cerverio obtained leave for the removal of the precious relics to their parish church, where they still repose.

Blessed Bartholomew is specially invoked against thunder and lightning and hail. He was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, who didst make Blessed Bartholomew a glorious champion of the faith and didst raise him to the crown of martyrdom, grant, through his merits and intercession, that we may ever bear the cross and deserve to be partakers with him in Thy glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL

Blessed Dominic and Gregory, Confessors

(13th Century)

April 26 **BLESSED DOMINIC** and **GREGORY** lived in the first century of the existence of the Order and belonged to one of the Convents of Castile. Inflamed with zeal for the conversion of souls, they extended their missionary labours into the neighbouring kingdom of Aragon. Here these true sons of Saint Dominic, following the example of their Holy Patriarch, travelled on foot from village to village, begging their daily bread, preaching to the poor country folks, and shedding around them in all directions the odour of their virtues. It chanced one day, as they were journeying through a mountainous district on the outskirts of the Pyrenees, in the diocese of Barbastro, that they were overtaken by a terrific storm. There was no human habitation within sight, so the two holy Friars took shelter beneath an overhanging rock, which fell and crushed them beneath its weight. The bells of the neighbouring parishes rang out, untouched by any mortal hand; and this marvel, together with a miraculous light which appeared over the scene of the accident, brought the people in crowds to the spot. The broken rocks were removed, and beneath them, crushed and disfigured, but exhaling a heavenly perfume, were found the bodies of the two holy missionaries, locked in a fraternal embrace.

The inhabitants of four different parishes disputed with each other the possession of the sacred remains. It was at length agreed that the bodies should be placed on a mule, and that the parish in the direction of which the animal turned its steps should have the

treasure. The mule took the road leading to Besians ; **April 26** and the two holy men were accordingly buried in the church of that place, where they have always been held in the greatest honour. On the Rogation Days and in times of public calamity, their relics are solemnly carried in procession, and when a storm rises are exposed in the porch of the church. When the land is parched by drought, recourse is had to their intercession. They were beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, of whose mercy there is no end, we humbly beseech Thee, that, through the intercession of Blessed Dominic and Gregory, Thy Confessors, we may be released from the burden of our sins and may attain to the glory granted to them. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 29

Saint Peter, Martyr

(A.D. 1203-1252)

SAINT PETER was born in the year 1203 at Verona, of **April 29** parents imbued with those heretical doctrines which were at that time being so widely disseminated in Northern Italy by the Waldenses, Cathari, and other revivors of the errors of the Manichees. When only seven years old, little Peter began vigorously to oppose their dangerous teaching. His uncle one day asked him what he learnt at school. "I learn the Creed," replied the boy vehemently, "the Creed, which says that God made heaven and earth" (a doctrine expressly denied by the heretics). This bold spirit and strong allegiance to the faith grew with his years. He received the habit of a Friar Preacher from the hands of

April 29 Saint Dominic himself, who clearly foresaw the future greatness of his young disciple.

As soon as he had been ordained priest, he entered on a course of apostolic labours for the overthrow of the heresies which from childhood he had abhorred. He preached throughout all the Northern States of Italy, specially at Milan, where the fruits of his apostolate were prodigious. His sermons were accompanied by miraculous signs of every description. He cast out devils, restored health to the sick, and foretold many future events. One day, as he was preaching to a vast audience at Milan, the burning rays of the sun caused great inconvenience to himself and his hearers. One of the heretics present said to him, "If the faith you defend be true, why do you not ask of God to send a cloud to shelter us from the heat?" "With all my heart," replied the Saint, "if you and your companions will promise to renounce your errors, should the sign you ask for be granted." Then the Catholics murmured greatly, for it seemed to them that Peter was risking the faith on an impossible chance. But, even as they spoke, a cloud appeared in the hitherto cloudless sky and hung over their heads like a canopy for the space of more than an hour; and his opponents withdrew, covered with confusion.

Saint Peter had a wonderful familiarity with the Angels and Saints, and was often seen surrounded by them. On one occasion the presence of these celestial visitants in his cell led to his being accused of admitting females within the enclosure, to the great scandal of the house. The Saint said not a word in his own justification, but humbly accepted the severe penance imposed on him. Nevertheless he could not but be sensible to the loss of reputation which threatened to put an end to his harvest of souls; and, complaining of it sweetly to our Lord in prayer, a voice

spoke to him from the crucifix, saying, "And I, Peter, what had I done?" Then the Saint accepted his cross with renewed humility and fervour, and bore it generously, until it pleased God to make known the truth and his good name was once more restored.

He took an active and intelligent part in the affairs of his Order and governed in turn some important Convents. In obedience to a command received from our Blessed Lady herself, he greatly assisted in the establishment of the Order of the Servites, whose seven holy founders had been shown to him in vision under the figure of seven fragrant lilies of dazzling beauty growing on a mountain-top.

His success in the office of Inquisitor was so great that the heretics saw themselves reduced to the last extremity. Wherever he appeared, there was a universal renunciation of the errors which it had cost them so much labour to disseminate. Hence their rage against him knew no bounds, and they leagued together for his destruction. Every day at the Elevation in the Mass, it had been the Saint's custom to ask of God the grace to shed his blood for the faith; and he told a companion in confidence that he was never granted such interior sweetness and consolation as in the moment of making that daily request. It was granted to him on Saturday in Easter Week, A.D. 1252, when the heretic assassins waylaid him on the road between Como and Milan. The Saint, to whom his approaching death had been revealed, sang, as he journeyed along, the Sequence, "*Victimæ Paschali*," with the companion who was to share his martyrdom. Struck to the ground by a blow on the head and mortally wounded, he retained sufficient consciousness to exclaim, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Then, dipping his finger in his blood, he wrote on the ground the words he had so

April 29 proudly quoted to his uncle as a boy: *Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem*. The enraged assassins struck him a second time and he expired. His body was brought to Milan with great pomp, the Archbishop and people going out in procession to meet it. The miracles wrought at his tomb were the means of reclaiming a vast number of heretics, so that Saint Peter had the happiness of working for the salvation of souls after his death as successfully as in life. The most touching of these conversions was that of his murderer, Carino. The unhappy man, though captured on the scene of his crime, succeeded in making his escape. Falling sick at Forli, he was taken to a hospital adjoining the Dominican Convent, and, believing himself dying, made his confession with every token of repentance to one of the Fathers. He did not die, however, and on his restoration to health craved admission among the Brethren of the Saint whom he had slain. With extraordinary charity they received him among them, and he continued for forty years to lead a life of true penance, and finally died in the odour of sanctity.

Saint Peter was canonized by Pope Innocent IV. in the piazza outside the Dominican Church at Perugia, less than a year after his martyrdom.

Prayer

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we may imitate with due devotion the faith of Blessed Peter, Thy Martyr, who, for the extension of that same faith, was made worthy to obtain the palm of martyrdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

.APRIL 30

Saint Catharine of Siena, Virgin

(A.D. 1347-1380)

SAINT CATHARINE was born at Siena in Tuscany, April 30 A.D. 1347. Her father, James Benincasa, was a dyer of that city and she was the youngest of his numerous family. Whilst still a little child she attempted to retire into solitude, in imitation of the Fathers of the Desert, and at the age of seven she consecrated herself to God by a vow of virginity. When she grew older her parents endeavoured to persuade her to marry and the Saint had to undergo much domestic persecution on this account, all which she bore with invincible patience and constancy. At length her father became convinced that her resolution was from God, and gave orders that she should no longer be opposed in her pious designs. She spent some years in a life of strict retirement and at the age of about seventeen took the habit of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, being, it is said, the first unmarried woman who had ever been received into that Sisterhood. She continued, however, as before, to live in her father's house, devoting herself to exercises of prayer and the practice of severe austerities. It was the Divine will that she should be tried by grievous temptations, over which her humility and unshaken confidence in God enabled her to be always victorious. She was miraculously taught to read and write and Our Lord deigned often to recite the Office with her in her little chamber.

On the last day of the Carnival, A.D. 1367, she was visibly espoused to our Divine Lord, and some years

April 30 later He vouchsafed to her the mysterious favour of the exchange of hearts and the impression of the sacred Stigmata. After her espousals she began to come forth from her retirement and to take part in the household duties. Our Lord had taught her to seek and find Him in His two chosen dwelling-places—the Sacrament of His love and the person of His poor. She was accustomed to approach the Holy Table very often, at a time when frequent Communion was by no means common; her influence and example are said to have largely contributed to the revival of this salutary practice. In accordance with her own maxim, that “the love we conceive towards God we must bring forth in acts of charity towards our neighbour,” she began to practise the most heroic services of charity. Her self-devotion was on more than one occasion repaid only by the blackest calumny and ingratitude; but her sweetness and patience triumphed, and her persevering prayer won back her persecutors to God. Marvellous conversions were granted in answer to her fervent supplications and she had an extraordinary power over the evil spirits, whom she often drove from the bodies of the possessed.

The sphere of her influence gradually widened as her sanctity made itself more and more apparent. She was called upon to heal the terrible feuds which were the bane of Italy in the Middle Ages, to urge on the undertaking of a fresh Crusade against the infidels, and to become the counsellor of Popes, Cardinals, and Princes. The Florentines had revolted against the Holy See, and, fearing the consequences of their rebellion, they entreated the holy maiden of Siena to plead their cause with the Sovereign Pontiff. For this end she visited Avignon, where the Papal Court then resided, and whilst there succeeded in persuading Gregory XI. to return to Rome. The Saint went

back to Florence as ambassador from the Pope, and after much trouble and persecution succeeded in effecting a reconciliation between that city and the Apostolic See. She dictated some sublime treatises whilst in a state of ecstasy, and they were afterwards published under the title of the "Dialogue." A great number of her letters to persons of all classes and conditions have also been preserved; they are full of the most beautiful and practical instructions in the spiritual life.

Saint Catharine greatly exerted herself to maintain the authority of the Holy See during the unhappy schism which followed on the death of Gregory XI. His successor, Urban VI., summoned her to Rome towards the close of the year 1378 that he might be assisted by her wise counsels. The remaining seventeen months of her earthly pilgrimage were spent in the Eternal City. There she prayed, and suffered, and finally offered her life as a victim for the Church and its visible Head, "the Christ on earth," as she loved to call him. The sacrifice was accepted; and after many weeks of agonising suffering, both of body and soul heroically endured, she departed to her Spouse on Sunday, April 29, A.D. 1380. She was canonized in the year 1461 by Pius II., himself a native of Siena, who wrote her Office with his own hand.

We cannot better conclude this brief notice than by quoting two of Saint Catharine's favourite maxims which were taught her by our Lord in these words: "Thou must not love Me, or thy neighbour, or thyself, for thyself; but thou must love all for Me alone;" and again, "Make in thy soul as it were a little spiritual cell, closed in with the material of My Will . . . which must so encompass every faculty of thy body and soul that thou shalt never speak of anything but what thou deemest pleasing to Me, nor think nor do

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April 30 anything but what thou believest to be agreeable to Me."

Prayer

(See Feast of Translation, p. 56.)

MAY 5

Saint Pius V., Pope and Confessor

(A.D. 1504-1572)

May 5 SAINT PIUS was born of the noble but fallen family of the Ghislieri, A.D. 1504, at the little village of Bosco, in the north of Italy, and received in baptism the name of Michael. His parents were in such poverty that the boy's education was necessarily imperfect and there seemed no human hope of his being able to carry out the desire of his heart, which was to consecrate himself to God in the religious state. One day, however, two Dominican Friars chanced to pass through Bosco and were so struck by the intelligence and angelic appearance of the young Michael that they proposed to take him with them to their Convent of Voghera. There he was enabled to pursue his studies, and at the age of sixteen was clothed in the habit of the Order, being known in religion by the name of Michael Alessandrino, Alessandria being the town nearest to Bosco. After having completed his studies and received holy orders, he was employed for sixteen years in teaching, and, much against his will, was compelled to accept the office of Prior successively in various Convents of the Order.

In the year 1543 he was appointed Inquisitor for the district lying on the borders of Switzerland and

Italy, which he was to defend against the inroads **May 5** of the Protestant heretics, who were seeking to spread their pestilential errors over the fair plains of Lombardy. Father Michael showed the utmost courage and intrepidity in the discharge of his office and succeeded in escaping the ambushes laid for him by the heretics, who continually sought his life. After some years he became Commissary of the Holy Office of the Inquisition and had to fix his residence in Rome. Pope Paul IV. raised him to the dignity of Bishop of Sutri and Nepi, a small diocese in the neighbourhood of Rome, silencing the remonstrances which the humility of the Saint suggested by an imperative command henceforth to accept without raising any difficulties whatever might be imposed on him for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. In 1557 the same Pontiff made him Cardinal by the title of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, and soon afterwards supreme and perpetual Inquisitor of Christendom. Pius IV., who succeeded Paul IV. in the chair of Saint Peter, translated him to the more important see of Mondovi.

On the death of Pius IV. he was elected as his successor in the January of 1566, mainly through the influence of Saint Charles Borromeo. It was with the utmost difficulty that he could be induced to accept the tiara; at length, however, in a voice choked by his sobs, he gave his consent, and assumed the title of Pius V.

His manner of life after his elevation to the chair of Saint Peter relaxed in no way from the simplicity and regularity of his former years. Adhering as far as possible to the rule of his Order, he rose every day at dawn and recited the Divine Office, after which he spent several hours in mental prayer before entering on the transaction of business. He celebrated

May 5 Mass every day, and every evening recited the Rosary and the Litany of our Lady with his entire household. During the Carnival he was accustomed to visit the Seven Churches on foot, singing psalms as he went along or rapt in prayer for the members of his flock, exposed during those days of license to so many temptations to evil. He used to visit in person the hospitals of the city, and loved to minister with his own hands to the wants of their suffering inmates. His tenderness for the poor was touching to behold, and an English Protestant was converted by seeing him kiss the feet of a miserable being covered with wounds.

His pontificate was marked by several important events, especially by the memorable victory of Lepanto, which rescued Europe from the danger then threatening her from the successful encroachments of the Turks. The complete destruction of the Ottoman fleet was divinely revealed to him at the moment at which it took place; and in gratitude for this great deliverance he established the annual festival of Our Lady of Victories (afterwards changed to the festival of the Rosary), and added the invocation "Help of Christians" to the Litany of Loreto.

His lot was cast in the sad and troublous times immediately following the so-called "Reformation." He found himself, therefore, compelled to take part in the political and religious disputes of that unhappy period. He had to protect the Church with the utmost firmness from the attacks daily made upon her by open enemies as well as by disaffected or ambitious princes. He hesitated not to excommunicate the powerful English Queen, Elizabeth, and did all in his power to console and encourage her unfortunate victim, Mary Stuart.

Saint Pius revised and published the Catechism of the Council of Trent and enforced its decrees; he

also caused the Breviary and Missal to undergo a **May 5** careful revision and established greater uniformity in the Church Liturgy, which hitherto had varied much in different countries. Nor was the Holy Pontiff less energetic in the promotion of virtue and the restoration of order in his own dominions, which he purged of banditti, extending his just severity to all public sinners, whom he banished from the city of Rome under pain of corporal punishment.

When he felt his end approaching, he resolved, in spite of extreme pain and weakness, to visit the holy places of the Eternal City for the last time. In the course of this pilgrimage, which he insisted on performing on foot, some English Catholics were pointed out to him, driven from their country by the fury of Elizabeth. He caused their names to be taken down, that he might provide for their needs, exclaiming, "O Lord my God, were it in my power, how willingly would I shed my blood for them all!"

His holy and happy death took place on the 1st of May, A.D. 1572, after a pontificate of six years three months and twenty-four days. He lies buried in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. Numerous miracles have been worked through his intercession. He was beatified by Clement X., A.D. 1672, and canonized by Clement XI., A.D. 1712.

Prayer

O God, who wast pleased to elect the Blessed Pius to the office of chief Pontiff for the defeat of the enemies of Thy Church and the restoration of Divine worship, grant that we may be defended by his watchful guardianship, and be so intent upon Thy holy service, that, overcoming all the wiles of our enemies, we may enjoy eternal peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 10

Saint Antoninus, Bishop and Confessor

(A.D. 1390-1459)

May 10 SAINT ANTONINUS was born at Florence in A.D. 1390. His father, Nicholas Pierozzi, followed the legal profession and filled several important offices in the city. The child received at the font the name of Anthony, but his smallness of stature and extreme gentleness of disposition caused him to be always known by the graceful Italian diminutive of Antonino (little Anthony). His childhood was one of remarkable holiness and almost continual prayer, and he assiduously attended the sermons of the celebrated Friar Preacher, Blessed John Dominici. This holy man was superintending the erection of a new Convent at Fiesole, in the neighbourhood of Florence, and Antoninus implored admission into the Community. Alarmed at the extreme delicacy of his appearance, Blessed John was afraid to accede to his desires and sought some plausible excuse for a refusal. He told him, therefore, that it was necessary first for him to make further progress in his studies, but promised to admit him when he should have learnt by heart the Book of Decretals. This seemingly impossible condition in no way damped the ardent spirit of the young postulant. Within a year he had accomplished the task, and, coming to Blessed John, claimed the fulfilment of his promise. It was not refused; and on the Feast of St. Dominic, A.D. 1504, the holy youth was clothed in the habit of the Friars Preachers. He was sent to Cortona to make his noviceship under Blessed Lawrence of Ripafratta, and had there as his companions Blessed Peter Capucci

and Fra Angelico of Fiesole. In such an atmosphere of sanctity, Antoninus made rapid progress in perfection. May 30

The first miracle recorded of him is typical of the affectionate simplicity of his character. To comfort a little girl who was weeping bitterly over a broken pitcher, he collected the shattered fragments, made the sign of the cross over them, and restored the vessel to her whole and uninjured. During the greater part of his life the Saint filled the office of Prior in one or other of the most important Convents of the Order, and was himself the founder of the celebrated Convent of Saint Mark at Florence. He was an indefatigable student and wrote a Summa of Moral Theology, works on Canon Law, treatises for Confessors and Parish Priests, and a Chronicle of the History of the World. Saint Antoninus possessed in an eminent degree the gift of counsel; cases of conscience and questions on Canon Law were continually submitted to him for solution, and such was his power of restoring peace to troubled souls, that he was popularly called "the Angel of Counsels." He assisted in the capacity of theologian at the General Council of Florence, A.D. 1439, where he had the consolation of witnessing the reunion of the Greek and Latin Churches. He organized a vast system of charity, which is still in existence in our own day, for the relief of the bashful poor of Florence, and greatly contributed to the development of Confraternities of Christian Doctrine for the instruction of the young.

In the year 1446 he was raised to the archiepiscopal throne of Florence, a dignity which he only accepted when compelled to do so under penalty of excommunication. As Archbishop he made no change in the poverty and simplicity of his life. His entire household consisted of six persons; his purse and his time

May 10 were equally the property of his flock. In his government he united a singular sweetness and gentleness with the firmness and intrepidity which were called for by the abuses of the times. It was remarked how, amidst the multiplicity of cares which his extensive and vigorous administration entailed upon him, his countenance never lost its expression of calm serenity. Pre-eminently a man of prayer, never did he suffer the turmoil of business to disturb the inner sanctuary of his soul. When Florence was desolated by the plague and subsequently by famine and terrible earthquakes, Saint Antoninus showed himself indeed the father of his people. Night and day he might be seen traversing the city, followed by a few devoted friends and by an ass laden with provisions and remedies.

His miracles were very numerous and bear a striking testimony to the simple and unostentatious life of the great prelate, much of whose time was spent amongst the poorest of his flock. At one time we find him mending the mill of a poor man, ruined by a flood; at another, his blessing melts the iron which has hardened in the furnace of some obstinate sinners, whose hearts melt also into repentance at the forbearance of the Archbishop.

Saint Antoninus is commonly represented in Christian art holding in his hand a pair of scales. This is in allusion to the following miraculous circumstance. An inhabitant of Florence once brought him as a New Year's gift a beautiful basket of fruit, in the secret hope of receiving a rich reward. When, instead of the expected donation, the Saint dismissed him with merely the words, "May God reward you," he went off in a very discontented frame of mind. On learning this, the Archbishop summoned him once more into his presence, and, calling for scales, placed the basket of fruit in one side of the balance and the written

words "May God reward you!" in the other. The **May 10** slip of paper was found to far outweigh the fruits, and the donor retired covered with confusion.

Nicholas V., who canonized Saint Bernardine of Siena, remarked that Antoninus living deserved canonization as much as Bernardine dead; and the same Pope forbade any appeals or complaints to be received in Rome against sentences passed by the saintly Archbishop of Florence.

The deathbed of Saint Antoninus was a holy and happy scene. "To serve God is to reign," were the words ever on his lips, together with that salutation of the glorious Virgin which had ever been among his favourite ejaculations: "O holy and immaculate Virginity, with what praises to extol thee I know not." He expired on May 2, A.D. 1459, surrounded by the Friars of the Convent of Saint Mark, in whose midst he desired to be interred. A very remarkable testimony of honour was paid to him by the reigning Pontiff, Pius II., who commanded that his funeral should be celebrated with extraordinary splendour, and granted an indulgence to all who should kiss the hands or feet of the deceased Archbishop during the eight days that the body remained exposed before burial. The Bull of Saint Antoninus's canonization was drawn up by Adrian IV., A.D. 1523, but not published until the reign of his successor, Clement VII.

Prayer

May we be assisted, O Lord, by the merits of Thy blessed Confessor and Bishop, Saint Antoninus, that, as we confess Thee wonderful in him, so we may glory in that Thou art merciful unto us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 12

Blessed Jane of Portugal, Virgin

(A. D. 1452-1490)

May 12 KING ALFONSO V. of Portugal, grieved at having no children, went as a private pilgrim to a much-frequented church in the diocese of Lamego dedicated to Saint Dominic, earnestly begging of God to grant him an heir to his crown. The following year the Queen gave birth to a daughter, who was destined one day to wear the Dominican habit and who received in baptism the name of Jane. The States of the kingdom assembled at the King's desire and solemnly swore allegiance to the infant Princess in case no male heir should be born to inherit the crown. Three years later, however, a prince was born, who afterwards ascended the throne as John II. ; and shortly after his birth the two royal children had the misfortune to lose their mother. The King entrusted the Princess to the care of a noble and virtuous lady, by name Doña Beatrix de Menezes, who trained her in habits of solid virtue and piety. The childhood of the little Jane was indeed wholly consecrated to God, and, as she grew up, she daily aimed at a yet closer union with Him whom she had already chosen as the Spouse of her soul. Despising all the flatteries and allurements of the Court, she constructed a little oratory, where she endeavoured to hide herself from the gaze of the world and to spend every moment she could call her own in prayer.

The King, who had formed great designs for the Princess, was careful to have her instructed in everything that befitted her station ; and it was with

excessive pain and reluctance that she found herself compelled to leave her chosen solitude in order to learn dancing, and singing, and other worldly accomplishments. It was by no means easy for her to pursue the life of penance and devotion to which she felt herself called, secure from the notice of the Court. She selected, however, two of her ladies-in-waiting, who, like herself, were earnestly striving after perfection, together with an old and very pious knight in her father's service, and, with their assistance, she gave abundant alms to the bashful poor and procured for herself coarse woollen underclothing and a rough hair-shirt, which she constantly wore beneath her royal robes. She slept on the bare ground, with a log for her pillow, and spent great part of the night in prayer and penitential exercises. She had a tender devotion to the Passion of Christ, and caused a representation of the crown of thorns to be added to her heraldic arms.

At the age of sixteen she sought the King's permission to enter a poor and recently founded Convent of Dominicanesses at Aveiro, which was said to be the strictest and most fervent in all Portugal. Her request was met by an absolute refusal, and for a time she was compelled outwardly to acquiesce in this decision. Shortly afterwards, however, her father and brother set out on an expedition against the Moors in Africa, leaving Jane to govern the kingdom in their absence. This she continued to do with consummate prudence until their triumphant return, when she resolved to take advantage of the joyful meeting to throw herself at her father's feet and extort his consent to her long-desired retirement from the world. Alfonso did not refuse, and she accordingly took up her abode in the Convent of her choice when in the twentieth year of her age. She could not, however, take the habit

May 12

May 12 until the consent of the States of the kingdom had been obtained, and this was delayed for no less than three years. At the end of that time, the Princess took the bold step of acting without their leave, and was accordingly clothed, to the great joy of the Community, on the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, A.D. 1475.

Her trials, however, were not yet over. No sooner was it known that she had taken the habit than the whole kingdom, and, as it would seem, all the powers of hell leagued together against the poor novice. The Court wore mourning as if for her death. A message from the King demanded that she should be given up to him, and the Prioress and Community were threatened with the severest penalties should they fail to obey. The Prince, her brother, forced his way into the Convent and even into her cell, and threatened to tear the habit from her back and cut it into a thousand pieces. This war of tongues continued with unabated violence for some time, but, strange to say, was never suffered to proceed to action. At length there was a temporary cessation and the Princess was for a while left free to devote herself with renewed fervour to the life of prayer and penance which she had chosen.

She delighted in the humblest exercises of the religious state, sweeping, washing, carrying wood, and waiting on the sick in the infirmary. In order to be like the other Sisters in all things, she learnt to spin and to sew, and attained great perfection in these arts, so that it became her privilege to spin the linen thread from which the corporals were to be made. She also employed herself in the manufacture of disciplines and hair-shirts. She had a wonderful gift for consoling those among her Sisters who were suffering from interior trials; and by her burning words, and the

prayers and mortifications which she offered on their behalf, she often obtained their deliverance. **May 12**

Blessed Jane's profession was long deferred and her family constantly pressed her to accept one or other of the royal suitors who sought her hand for themselves or their respective heirs. The death of Louis XI. of France in the year 1483, and of Richard III. of England two years later, delivered her from this vexatious persecution; and, though she dared not take the solemn vows of religion in face of the determined opposition of the kingdom, she at length ventured to bind herself by simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Her course was a shining one but of short duration. In the year 1489, her health, which had long been failing, entirely gave way. No remedy availed to bring relief. The only thing which seemed to assuage her sufferings was drinking cold water, and this the physicians forbade her to do; so that she suffered like her Divine Spouse from a continual and tormenting thirst. On Christmas Eve she insisted on being present at the solemn chanting of the Martyrology; and on the Good Friday of the following year caused herself to be carried to the choir to take part in the Adoration of the Cross; and during the other ceremonies of Holy Week, at which her weakness would not permit her to assist, she begged the Sisters to leave the doors open, that she might at least catch the distant sound of the chant. On Easter Sunday she communicated in the choir, and before leaving it gazed long and lovingly on the stalls, as though grieved at the thought that she would never again sing God's praises there in the company of her Sisters.

During her illness, Blessed Jane had a great fear of death and struck her breast continually, saying, "I have sinned, O Lord, have mercy on me;" then, devoutly clasping her crucifix in her hands, she would

May 12 add, "Turn away Thy face from my sins." But this fear in no way diminished her confidence in her Divine Spouse. The end came at last on May 12, A.D. 1490. As the Sisters praying around her came to the words in the Litany, "All ye holy Innocents, pray for her," the faithful Spouse of Christ breathed forth her pure soul to God.

Her glory was manifested by many wonderful visions and miracles, and Pope Innocent XII. gave permission for her festival to be celebrated in the kingdom of Portugal and the Order of Saint Dominic.

Prayer

O God, who didst strengthen Thy Holy Virgin the Blessed Jane with unshaken constancy amidst royal pleasures and the allurements of the world, grant, through her intercession, that Thy faithful may despise all earthly things and ever aspire after the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 13

Blessed Albert of Bergamo, Confessor

(A.D. 1279)

May 13 BLESSED ALBERT was born of poor and virtuous parents at the little town of Villa d'Ogna, near Bergamo in Italy. When only seven years old, he began to practise penance and charity, fasting three days in the week and giving the food of which he deprived himself to the poor. His childhood and youth were spent in innocence and yet he practised severe austerities. During his hard labour in the fields he kept himself in continual recollection of spirit, making use of all the sights and sounds of nature as so many

steps to raise up his mind and heart to God. In **May 13** obedience to the wishes of his father, he married a young peasant girl, with whom he lived for many years in perfect concord. She even began to imitate him in his exercises of piety. But, on the death of his father, her dispositions underwent a sudden change and thenceforth she became a continual trial to him. She would bitterly reproach him for wasting, as she expressed it, so much of his time in prayer, as well as for his profuse liberality to the poor. In this latter respect it must be owned Blessed Albert's conduct was somewhat trying, as he would occasionally give away the very dinner which had been prepared for themselves and their labourers. More than once, however, God made good the loss by miracle; and the holy man, by his unalterable sweetness, patience, and silence under this vexatious domestic persecution, doubtless gained for himself a great treasure of merits.

Some powerful nobles having seized his little property, Albert, who by this time had become a widower, left the neighbourhood and settled at Cremona, where he earned for himself the title of "the diligent labourer." God was sometimes pleased to reveal the sanctity of His servant by miracles. Angels in human form came to help him in his work, thus enabling him to increase his earnings, almost the whole of which he distributed to the needy. One day he was carrying a barrel of wine to the house of a poor woman, when it accidentally slipped from his shoulder and broke to pieces on the road. "King of Glory, come to my assistance!" exclaimed the holy man, according to his wont in all difficulties. Then he collected the broken pieces of wood, adjusted them in their proper places, and collected the spilt wine with his hands so that not a drop was lost. Not content with bestowing on the

May 13 poor all that he could spare from his wages, he often solicited alms on their behalf.

His lodgings were near the Dominican Convent, and he placed himself under the direction of the Fathers, and received the habit as a Tertiary. Thenceforth he devoted his time and strength almost entirely to the service of the sick poor, visiting them, rendering them the lowliest services, assisting them by his prayers in their last agony, and accompanying their remains to the grave. He even succeeded in founding a hospital.

Blessed Albert exercised himself in these works of charity for a long time, until he understood it to be the will of God that he should undertake the life of a pilgrim, in which he spent several years. He is said to have visited the Holy Land once, the sanctuaries of Spain and in particular Saint James of Compostella eight times, and Rome nine times. He travelled in silence, wrapt in meditation or beguiling the monotony of the way by singing hymns or reciting psalms; and he may be said to have faithfully observed the precept of praying always. As he was returning to Cremona after these pilgrimages and was already almost at the gates of the city, he had to cross the river Po. The ferryman rudely refused to admit him into his boat without payment and the servant of God had no money. Then Blessed Albert cast his mantle on the waters and embarking upon it reached the opposite bank in safety.

Having settled down once more in the home of his adoption, he devoted himself especially to the service of poor pilgrims. In spite of his own extreme poverty, he lodged them under his roof, waited upon them with the same reverence he would have rendered to Christ Himself, conducted them to all the sanctuaries of the city, and then gave them an alms to enable them to continue their journey.

At length, worn out by his labours, he fell sick and asked for the Last Sacraments. The priest delaying to come, the Bread of Angels is said to have been brought to him by a white dove, which suddenly appeared in his room. Claspings his crucifix in his hands and covering it with kisses, he breathed forth his soul to his Creator on the 7th of May, A.D. 1279, being in the sixty-fifth, or, according to some writers, the seventy-fifth year of his age. When preparations were made for his interment in the cemetery, it was found impossible to penetrate the earth, so that it became necessary to carry the sacred remains to the church, where, beneath the very spot where the holy man had been wont to pray, a vault was found ready prepared, of the existence of which no one had previously been aware. Here the body was laid with great honour, the Bishop himself performing the funeral service.

Benedict XIV. approved the immemorial veneration paid to Blessed Albert, and gave permission for Mass and Office to be celebrated in his honour in the Dominican Order and by the clergy of the dioceses of Bergamo and Cremona.

Prayer

O God, who wast pleased that Blessed Albert, Thy Confessor, should shine with singular sanctity in a lowly condition of life, grant that we may so tread in his footsteps as to be worthy to obtain his rewards. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 14

**Blessed Egidius or Giles of Portugal,
Confessor**

(A.D. 1183-1265)

May 14 EGIDIUS (or GILES) RODRIGUEZ was born of noble parents at Vouzella in Portugal about A.D. 1183. His family destined him for the ecclesiastical state and sent him for his education to Coimbra, where he became eminent as a philosopher and devoted himself to the study of medicine. Several rich benefices had been obtained for him; but the young man entirely neglected his sacred obligations and even entered into an unholy compact with Satan, which he signed with his own blood. For seven years he is said to have studied magic in the caves of Toledo under his infernal master. When he reappeared amongst men, he was found to be endowed with a marvellous power over the elements and able to cure the most inveterate diseases. He took his degree at Paris as doctor in medicine and established his reputation by numerous and striking cures, evidently surpassing human power, whilst his life was one of unbridled iniquity.

But God in His infinite mercy had decreed to change this unhappy slave of the devil into one of His own most faithful and loving servants. One night, as Egidius was pursuing his unholy studies with the doors locked upon him, an armed horseman of gigantic stature suddenly appeared before him, and, shaking his lance, exclaimed in terrific accents, "Change thy life! Change thy life, I tell thee." The vision disappeared and the trembling Egidius cast a remorseful glance on the miserable past. But his bad habits soon regained

the mastery. Then the fearful apparition came a second time, charged full upon the unhappy sinner, and hurled him to the ground, exclaiming thrice, "Change thy life or I will slay thee." "I will change, Lord, I will change; pardon my delay," faltered the miserable man. He rose an altered being. His first act was to consign all his books of magic to the flames. He then set out for Spain, took the habit of a Friar Preacher in the newly founded Convent of Palencia about A.D. 1220, and fervently entered upon a course of penance and devotion.

But for seven years (the same term as that of his unholy apprenticeship to Satan) no comfort came to his anguished soul. Terrifying visions of demons continually assailed him and the thought of the contract signed with his own blood and binding him to the Evil One filled him with fear and remorse. Yet he persevered in prayer and penance, continually commending himself to her who is the Refuge of sinners and who is never invoked in vain. One night, when he was exposed to the most terrible assaults of the demons, the paper of his contract was suddenly and violently thrown on the ground before him, and an infernal voice cried aloud that Mary had conquered. Egidiu took the bond, felt himself freed from his sufferings, and for the first time tasted the consolations of a soul perfectly at rest.

From that time he became as distinguished for his holiness and his seraphic love of God as he had formerly been for his apostasy and rebellion. He bore in particular a most tender devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, the mere casual utterance of which often had the power to cast him into ecstasy. He became one of the most celebrated religious of his time, and was more than once Provincial of the Order in Spain. His miracles were very numerous, and his power over the evil spirits who had so long and so cruelly tyrannised

May 14

May 14 over him was exhibited in many wonderful ways. One of his favourite maxims was that we must forget ourselves in the service of our neighbour, and that the salvation of souls must take precedence of all private devotions.

There is something singularly attractive in the picture which is left us of the life and practices of this wonderful man. He would take advantage of the time when the Brethren were in the schools to clean and tidy their cells for them and would render the lowliest services to the sick. Being naturally of a cheerful and loquacious disposition, he found extreme difficulty in practising the rule of silence; but, understanding this to be a temptation of the devil, he resolved to live in strict retirement in his cell; and so generously did he overcome himself in this matter, that thenceforth he was hardly ever heard to utter a useless word. If any one needed his help, he would at once lay aside his own occupation and hasten with a joyful countenance to render the desired service. His whole bearing attracted souls to the love of the Order and to the practice of poverty and obedience. He was ever ready to console the tempted and to render the humblest services to the sick Brethren.

When the hour of his death drew nigh, he caused a hair-cloth to be stretched upon the ground, and, extending himself upon it, received the Last Sacraments and spoke words of consolation to his weeping Brethren. Then he raised his hands to heaven, saying, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit;" after which, stretching forth his arms in the form of a cross, without agony, he happily departed this life on the Feast of the Ascension, A.D. 1265.

Benedict XIV. approved the veneration which had always been paid to Blessed Egidius in the Dominican Order and the kingdom of Portugal.

Prayer

We humbly implore Thy mercy, O God, that as in **May 14** that same preventing mercy Thou didst cause the blessed Egidius to return back to the way of holiness and justice, so Thou wouldst translate us from slavery and the death of sin into life and perfect liberty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 20**Blessed Columba of Rieti, Virgin****(A.D. 1468-1501)**

BLESSED COLUMBA was born of humble parents at **May 20** Rieti in Italy, probably in A.D. 1468. She received in baptism the name of Angela; but, as she was held at the font, a white dove suddenly appeared, and, after flying three times round the baptistery, settled on the infant's head; and thenceforth she was always called by the name of Columba (dove). Her saintliness of disposition was manifested even from her infancy. When barely three years old, she secretly strewed thorns over her little bed; and, when only a little older, she took the discipline with severity and endeavoured to fast on Fridays on bread and water and to go barefoot. As soon as she had learnt the Hail Mary, she placed herself especially under Our Lady's protection and at the age of twelve consecrated herself to God by a vow of virginity. She became very intimate with a Congregation of Nuns of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, then established at Rieti, and under their guidance made rapid progress in the saintly sciences of mortification and prayer.

Her parents were desirous of giving her in marriage,

May 20 and had even fixed the day for her betrothal, when Columba was instructed by a heavenly vision to imitate the example of Saint Catharine of Siena. Interpreting this to signify the cutting off of her hair, she instantly obeyed; and, entering the room where her parents and the intended bridegroom with his friends were awaiting her, she flung the hair contemptuously on the ground and declared her unalterable resolution to remain the spouse of Christ alone. After some further persecution she was at length permitted to follow the way of life to which God so strongly called her, and entered upon a course from the very thought of which nature recoils. Thrice every night she disciplined herself to blood; she seemed to live in prayer; and her fast, with the short interruptions of some of the greater festivals, was perpetual.

The fame of her sanctity induced a Spanish Bishop to journey from Rome to Rieti in order to see her. He recognised her in church by the appearance of a bright star which shone above her head, and instructed and consoled her, recommending her to practise very frequent Communion, and to make much use of the 90th Psalm: "*Qui habitat.*" One day when Columba was about nineteen, she beheld in vision the three holy founders, Saint Benedict, Saint Francis, and Saint Dominic, each inviting her to assume the habit of his Order; but Columba's choice had long ago been made and she looked lovingly at the Father of the Friars Preachers, who immediately claimed her for his own by throwing around her his mantle, whence exhaled a heavenly fragrance. After this she received the habit of the Third Order from the hands of the Prior of the Dominican Convent at Rieti on Palm Sunday. Her raptures, miracles, and prophecies were rendering her very famous, when God made known to her, A.D.

1488, that He desired her to leave her native city. She was brought in a mysterious manner to Perugia, where a Convent was built for her at the public expense and where she made her solemn profession on the Whit-Sunday of 1490. In less than two years she had gathered around her a Community of fifty members, whom she governed with great charity and prudence, though it was long before she could be induced to accept the title of Prioress. May 20.

When the plague visited the town of Perugia, Columba begged that the people might be spared and the wrath of God vented on herself; and her prayer was answered by a nine days' visitation of a most terrible malady. By her advice, the inhabitants earnestly besought Saint Dominic and Saint Catharine to take the city under their protection; public processions were made, and the scourge ceased its ravages.

In the summer of 1495, Pope Alexander VI. visited Perugia and at his desire Columba was brought before him. Scarcely had she touched the hem of his garment than she fell into ecstasy and remained for a long time motionless at his feet. On recovering the use of her senses, she was subjected to a searching examination in presence of the Pontiff, who professed himself entirely satisfied with the result, and granted her many favours. Two years later, she had an awful vision regarding the state of the Church and the chastisements which threatened Italy, of which she sent an account to the confessor of Alexander VI., at the same time uttering bitter reproaches against those who had brought such disgrace upon the Spouse of Christ.

Columba's life was one of severe bodily mortification and was deeply seamed and scarred with the marks of the cross of her Divine Bridegroom. Distrust, reproaches, injuries, and the blackest calumnies

May 20 were heaped upon her; she was even deprived of her confessor: her bodily sufferings from excruciating toothache and other painful disorders were extreme; but, though the pain sometimes drew tears from her eyes, she endured all with unalterable sweetness and patience, saying that our Lord is amiable everywhere and under all circumstances, but that it is on the cross that He shows Himself the most loving of friends.

Some months before her death, Saint Dominic appeared to her, saying, "Rejoice, my daughter. The hour is at hand when thou shalt be for ever united to thy Spouse." After the servant of God had undergone a long and painful illness, this happy hour came at length, on the eve of the Ascension, May 20, 1501. The Passion of our Lord was read to her at her own request; and at the words, "He gave up the ghost," she once more commended her soul to God, our Blessed Lady, Saint Dominic, and Saint Catharine. "My Spouse, my Spouse," she repeated, "come; it is now time; receive Thy servant, Lord; my sweet Lord, receive——" and as she pronounced this last word, she calmly breathed forth her soul to God. At the moment of her death she appeared in great glory to another beatified Saint of the Order, Blessed Osanna of Mantua.

Blessed Columba worked many miracles during her lifetime and many more were vouchsafed after her death through her intercession. She was beatified by Urban VIII.

Prayer

O God, who wast pleased that Thy Holy Virgin, the Blessed Columba, graced with the spotless whiteness of purity and innocence, should shine forth with heavenly splendours, grant, we beseech Thee, at her

intercession, that, serving Thee here with pure minds, **May 20**
we may deserve to enjoy the brightness of Thy glory
in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 22

**Saint Servatius, Bishop and Confessor,
Protector of the Dominican Order**

(A.D. 384)

SAINT SERVATIUS was of noble birth, and was **May 22**
renowned alike for his learning and sanctity. He
became Bishop of Tongres in Belgium, which then
formed part of Gaul, and in that capacity assisted
at the Council of Sardica, where he strenuously de-
fended the Catholic faith against the Arians. He
likewise stoutly resisted these heretics at the Council
of Rimini, and laboured to prevent the ill consequences
which threatened the Church through their frauds
and the weakness of the Bishops. Being sent by the
tyrant Magnentius, together with Saint Maximin,
Bishop of Treves, as ambassador to the Emperor
Constantius, he was honourably entertained by Saint
Athanasius at Alexandria.

Saint Gregory of Tours states that Saint Serva-
tius foretold the invasion of Gaul by the Huns, and
implored the Divine mercy by watching, fasting,
prayers, and many tears to avert so great a calamity
from the flock entrusted to his care. For this in-
tention he undertook a penitential pilgrimage to the
tomb of Saint Peter in Rome. As he was weeping
and praying there, the Prince of the Apostles appeared
to him and thus addressed him: "Wherefore dost
thou importune me? The Lord has decreed that the

May 22 Huns should enter Gaul and lay it waste in a terrible manner. Take my counsel, therefore; lose no time; set thy house in order, prepare thy grave, make ready a clean winding-sheet. Behold, thou shalt depart this life and shalt not witness the evils which the Huns are to bring upon Gaul, as the Lord our God hath spoken."

The holy Bishop, therefore, returned in all haste to his diocese, and with many tears imparted the sad tidings to his heart-broken flock. "Holy Father, do not abandon us," they exclaimed; "Good Shepherd, forget us not." Very shortly afterwards he fell ill, as Saint Peter had foretold, and closed his saintly life by a holy death on the 13th of May, A.D. 384, after an episcopate of thirty-seven years. It is recorded that when all the country round was white with snow, his tomb at Maestricht always remained free from it until the time when a church was raised over his holy remains.

Saint Servatius was declared Protector of the Dominican Order in consequence of the following circumstances. In the fourteenth century the Church and the Order were suffering bitter persecution from the schismatical Emperor, Lewis of Bavaria. Learning that the General Chapter was convoked to meet in his dominions, at the city of Cologne, A.D. 1330, this prince secretly plotted the death of the capitular Fathers. They had just assembled, when Saint Servatius appeared in a dream to one of their number, a very holy religious, warned him of the danger which threatened himself and his Brethren, and bade them flee to Maestricht. This they accordingly did, thus escaping the snares which had been laid for them. And though their coming to Maestricht was wholly unexpected, God disposed the hearts of the inhabitants to receive them with the utmost kindness.

In gratitude for this providential intervention, the Fathers decreed that the festival of Saint Servatius should henceforth be celebrated in the Order to the end of time. But, as it was at first instituted only under the rite of a Feast of Three Lessons, the great increase of festivals of higher rank caused it, after the lapse of years, to fall into disuse. To preserve the memory of so great a benefit, the Fathers, therefore, obtained permission from Pope Leo XII. that the festival of Saint Servatius should be henceforth celebrated throughout the entire Order with the rank of a *Totum Duplex*, or Greater Double. **May 22**

Prayer

Graciously hear these our prayers, we beseech Thee, O Lord, which we offer to Thee in this solemnity of Blessed Servatius, Thy Confessor and Bishop, that, as he deserved to do Thee worthy service, so, through his merits and intercession, Thou wouldst mercifully absolve us from all our sins. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 23

Blessed Lewis Mary Grignon de Montfort, Confessor

(A.D. 1673-1716)

LEWIS MARY GRIGNON, called de Montfort from the place of his birth, was born in Brittany of poor but pious parents of noble family, in the year 1673. In his youth he delighted in inducing his little sister and her companions to recite the Rosary, encouraging them to the practice by small presents. After going through his studies at the Jesuit College at Rennes, he repaired **May 23**

May 23 to Paris for his theological course and entered the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. Here his entire disregard of human respect in his practices of piety drew upon him many painful and humiliating trials, whilst his perfect obedience secured him from every illusion. Having been ordained priest, he returned to the west of France, and devoted himself to missionary labours. After a time he went on pilgrimage to Rome and entreated the Pope to send him to preach the Gospel in the East; but the Holy Father assured him that God called him, not to foreign missions, but to combat the errors of the day in his own country.

The remainder of his life was entirely consecrated to evangelising the western provinces of France, where, in the space of twelve years, he gave more than two hundred retreats and missions. Wherever he preached he established the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, making arrangements, if possible, for its daily recital. He had a great taste for drawing and painting, but, from a spirit of mortification, or for fear of distracting himself from the presence of God, he early made an entire sacrifice of this his favourite recreation. His great gift for poetry was wholly used in the service of his Divine Master, and many of the most popular hymns still used in France were written by him.

In 1710 he made his profession in the Third Order of Saint Dominic in the Convent of Friars Preachers at Nantes; and, like his holy Father, he continually strove to draw down the blessing of God on his apostolic labours by the practice of the severest penances. He was an object of hatred to the Jansenists, who at that time were insidiously spreading their errors in France. In many places they contrived to poison the minds of the Bishops against the servant of God by cruel calumnies, and sufferings and humiliations were his lifelong portion. On one

occasion when, after fifteen months' labour, he had almost completed the erection of a gigantic Calvary at a place called Pontchâteau in the diocese of Nantes, he was suddenly forbidden to proceed with the undertaking, found himself banished from the diocese, and beheld the work which had cost him so much labour destroyed by the hands of the militia of the district. In this bitter trial he saw nothing but the accomplishment of the holy will of God. "God be blessed," said he tranquilly; "God be blessed. I did not seek my own glory, but only the glory of God. I hope to receive from Him the same reward as if I had succeeded." At La Rochelle the Calvinists, irritated by the many conversions which the holy man had effected, attempted to poison him, and he suffered from the effects of the draught during the rest of his life.

Blessed Lewis founded schools and hospitals, and everywhere laboured for the restoration of the churches, which were at that time in a very dilapidated state. He established Missionaries to continue his work under the title of the Society of Mary, a Congregation of religious women called "*Filles de la Sagesse*" (Daughters of Wisdom), and a pious Association called "Brethren of the Holy Ghost."

Worn out by his labours and penances, the servant of God continued to devote himself to preaching till within a few days of his death, which took place on April 28, A.D. 1716, when he was only forty-three years of age. He was beatified by Pope Leo XIII. on the occasion of his sacerdotal jubilee, A.D. 1888.

Prayer

O God, who didst make Blessed Lewis Mary, Thy Confessor, an admirable preacher of the mystery of the Cross and of the Most Holy Rosary, and didst,

May 23 through him, give a new family to Thy Church, grant, by his merits and intercession, that, by the life, death, and resurrection of Thy only-begotten Son, we may obtain the rewards of eternal life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 25

Translation of the Relics of our Holy Father, Saint Dominic

(A.D. 1233)

May 25 THE body of the holy Patriarch, Saint Dominic, had been laid to rest, according to his own desire, in the Church of Saint Nicholas at Bologna, beneath the feet of his Brethren, and, in spite of continual prodigies and Divine favours granted to the faithful who prayed day and night at his tomb, his children allowed the sacred deposit to remain under the plain flagstone originally laid over it and took no steps for obtaining his canonization. Lest they should be thought to be seeking their own emolument under the appearance of piety, the Friars even broke and threw away the votive offerings brought by the people, and would not permit any exterior marks of devotion to be exhibited. It was necessity which at length compelled them to undertake the first translation of the sacred relics. The ever-increasing numbers of the Community obliged them to enlarge the Convent, and to pull down the old church and build a new and more spacious one. To do this the tomb of Saint Dominic would have to be disturbed. They accordingly applied for the requisite permission to Pope Gregory IX., who was no other than the Saint's old friend, Cardinal Ugolino. He joyfully granted the petition, at the

same time administering a sharp rebuke to the Friars **May 25** for their long negligence.

The solemn translation accordingly took place on Whit-Tuesday, May 24, A.D. 1233, during the General Chapter, which was held that year at Bologna. The Pope wished to have attended in person, but, being prevented from doing so, he deputed the Archbishop of Ravenna to represent him, in company with a number of other distinguished prelates. Three hundred Friars Preachers from all countries assembled to assist at this function, not without a secret fear on the part of some as to the state in which the sacred remains might be found, as they had long been exposed to rain and heat, owing to the dilapidated condition of the church. The opening of the tomb took place before daybreak, in the presence of Blessed Jordan, then Master-General of the Order, and the Fathers of the Chapter, together with the Bishops, Prelates, and Magistrates who were to assist at the ceremony. All stood round in silence whilst the Procurator, Father Rodolph of Faenza, raised the stone. Hardly had he begun to remove the earth and mortar that lay beneath than an extraordinary odour became perceptible, which increased in power and sweetness as they dug deeper, until at length, when the coffin appeared and was lifted out of the grave, the whole church was filled with the perfume as though from the burning of some rich and precious gums. The bystanders knelt on the pavement, shedding tears of emotion as the lid was raised, and the sacred remains, now reduced to bones, were exposed to their eyes.

It was the Master-General who raised the body of his beloved father and reverently laid it in a new coffin. The faithful were then admitted, and the Archbishop of Ravenna sang the Mass of the day,

May 25 whilst the fragrance diffused from the open coffin flooded the whole of the sacred edifice. Blessed Jordan in his circular letter to the Order thus describes the solemn function: "As the choir entoned the Introit, 'Receive the joy of your glory, giving thanks to God, who has called you to the celestial kingdom,' the Brethren in their gladness of heart took the words as if spoken from heaven. The trumpets sounded, the people displayed a countless multitude of tapers; and, as the procession moved along, there everywhere resounded the words, 'Blessed be Jesus Christ!'" He goes on to speak of the vast number of miraculous graces which were poured forth both before and after the ceremony. "Sight," he says, "was granted to the blind, power of walking to the lame, soundness to the paralyzed, speech to the dumb. . . . I myself saw Nicholas, an Englishman, who had long been paralyzed, leaping at this solemnity."

The coffin was then laid in the marble tomb prepared for it. But eight days later, to satisfy the devotion of some distinguished persons who had not been present on the previous occasion, the holy remains were again exposed to view. Then it was that Blessed Jordan, taking the sacred head between his hands, kissed it, whilst tears of tenderness flowed from his eyes; and, so holding it, he desired all the Fathers of the Chapter to approach and gaze at it for the last time. One by one they came and kissed the venerable relics. All were conscious of the same extraordinary fragrance; it remained on the hands and clothes of those who touched or came near the body. Nor was this the case merely when the grave was first opened. The tomb remained unclosed for fifteen days, during which interval it was guarded by officers appointed by the city magistrates; and all this time the same exquisite odour was sensible to all who visited the spot;

and Flaminus, who lived three hundred years later, **May 25** thus writes (A.D. 1527): "This divine odour adheres to the relics even to the present day."

A second translation of Saint Dominic's relics took place in the year 1267, when the holy body was removed to a more richly ornamented tomb. This translation, like the first, was made at the time of the General Chapter; and the head of the Saint, after being devoutly kissed by the Brethren and several Bishops who were present, was exposed to the veneration of the people from a lofty stage erected outside the Church of Saint Nicholas. The tomb was again opened A.D. 1383, when a portion of the head was placed in a silver reliquary, in order the more easily to satisfy the devotion of the faithful. Finally, A.D. 1469, the remains of the Saint were deposited in the magnificently sculptured shrine in which they now rest, which is regarded as the masterpiece of Nicholas Pisano.

Prayer

O God, who hast vouchsafed to enlighten Thy Church by the merits and teachings of Thy blessed Confessor, our holy Father, Saint Dominic, grant at his intercession that it may never be destitute of temporal help, and may always increase in spiritual growth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 27

**Blessed Peter Sanz and his Companions,
Martyrs**

(A.D. 1747-1748)

May 27 TO the Order of Friars Preachers, according to the testimony of Pope Benedict XIV., belongs the glory of having been the first to send missionaries to China and to water that ungrateful soil with the blood of Martyrs. It is no part of our present task to describe the apostolic labours of the sons of Saint Dominic in that far-off portion of the Master's vineyard; we can only here give a brief sketch of the life and martyrdom of five Spanish Friars who have recently received the honours of beatification at the hands of Pope Leo XIII., but who were by no means the first of their Brethren to shed their blood for the faith in China.

The Blessed Fathers, Peter Martyr Sanz, Francis Serrano, John Alcober, Joachim Royo, and Francis Diaz, were all born towards the close of the seventeenth or at the beginning of the eighteenth century. They all received the habit of Saint Dominic at a very early age in various Convents of their native land, showed themselves to be models of every religious virtue, and at their own earnest request were successively sent on the Chinese mission, the province of Fo-Kien becoming the scene of their labours. The apostolate of Blessed Peter Sanz began in 1715, and in 1730 he was consecrated Bishop of Mauricastrum *in partibus infidelium*. Blessed Joachim Royo was only twenty-three when he landed in China, and was ordained priest on the soil, which, after more than

thirty years of fruitful labour, he was to water with **May 27** his blood.

Some very interesting particulars have been preserved regarding the vocation of Blessed John Alcober. The Chinese mission seems early to have occupied his mind, but the extraordinary success which attended his preaching in his native land for a time damped the ardour of his desires, until it was rekindled in a wonderful manner. One day in Lent, in the midst of an impassioned appeal to the hearts of sinners, Blessed John seized a large crucifix, and, holding it up before the people, exclaimed, as though speaking in the person of Christ: "How long, O ye sons of men, will you be heavy of heart? How long, ye sinners, will you remain hardened?" Then it pleased his Divine Master to speak to him in a clear voice from the crucifix, saying: "And thou, John—how long?" The words were heard by himself alone; but his astonished audience were witnesses of the deep emotion of the preacher, who was obliged at once to leave the pulpit. Our Lord's tender reproach did not fall unheeded on his ears, and the close of A.D. 1726 found him in China, where he had recourse to the most ingenious devices to gain access to the Christians in the midst of the persecution which was then raging.

Blessed Francis Diaz was by far the youngest of the heroic band, and concerning him also some edifying details have come down to us. To his father's earnest entreaties that he would take possession of a family benefice which had fallen vacant when he was still a mere boy, he replied: "Urge me no more, father; the riches and comforts of life are nothing to me. I shall consecrate myself to God in the Order of Saint Dominic as soon as I am old enough; I shall join the Fathers who volunteer for the Philippines; and I shall shed my blood for Jesus Christ in China." On the

May 27 news of his martyrdom being brought to his father, the old man, in the midst of his tears and thanksgivings, related this incident.

When a fresh persecution unexpectedly broke out in the year 1746, three of the missionaries were soon seized, imprisoned, and cruelly tormented to make them reveal the hiding-place of the Bishop, Father Peter Sanz, and of Father Royo. On hearing this, the two thus sought after voluntarily surrendered themselves, in the vain hope of saving their Brethren. All five were immediately dragged to Fou-Tcheou, where they were thrown into separate prisons, and at various times examined and put to most cruel torments. Astonished at their unalterable patience, the pagans asked them if they felt no pain. "Indeed I do," replied the venerable Bishop, "but I think of my Saviour's sufferings." During the whole of his captivity, which lasted several months, the holy old man faithfully observed the rule of his Order and rose at midnight to recite his Rosary, being no longer able to say the Divine Office, as his Breviary had been taken from him. He was the first of the little band to receive the crown of martyrdom, being beheaded on May 26th, A.D. 1747, whilst his afflicted flock were reciting the Rosary for him.

The other four Confessors of the faith bore their prolonged imprisonment with equal cheerfulness, and ceased not to labour for the salvation of souls even to the end. It was in his dark dungeon and into his chained hands that Blessed Francis Serrano received the Bulls whereby Pope Benedict XIV. appointed him coadjutor to Bishop Sanz, with the title of Bishop of Tipasa and Pro-Vicar Apostolic of Fo-Kien. He did not, however, live to receive episcopal consecration, being honoured instead with the martyr's crown, which he obtained, together with his three companions, on

October 28th, A.D. 1748. Blessed Francis Serrano **May 27** and Blessed Joachim Royo were stifled in a horrible manner in their prison, whilst Blessed John Alcober and Blessed Francis Diaz were strangled. The relics of the martyrs were gathered up by the faithful, and portions of them were subsequently brought to Europe.

Prayer

O God, who didst endow Thy blessed Martyrs, Bishop Peter and his companions, both with constancy and charity to preach the faith to heathen nations, grant us, we beseech Thee, through their example and intercession, to persevere constantly in Thy faith. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 28

Blessed Maria Bartolomea Bagnesi, Virgin

(A.D. 1514-1577)

MARIA BARTOLOMEA BAGNESI was born in Florence **May 28** of noble parents on the Feast of Saint Bartholomew, A.D. 1514. From her earliest childhood she gave token of her future sanctity, continually repeating: "I will have no other Spouse than Jesus." Four of her elder sisters having become nuns and others being married, Maria had to assume the management of the house whilst still a mere girl; but, in spite of the manifold duties which devolved upon her, and which she discharged with marvellous prudence and success, she never neglected any of her exercises of piety. Her father determined to give her in marriage to one of the many suitors who sought her hand; but at the bare mention of an earthly alliance, Maria fell to the ground, stricken in all her limbs with a strange weak-

May 28 ness, and she was confined to her bed during the remaining forty-five years of her life, except for a brief interval, after her profession as a Dominican Tertiary, when she was able to visit the Church of Santa Maria Novella and some of the Convents of the city.

Her bodily sufferings were excruciating and always redoubled in violence on occasion of the great festivals of the Church. Satan was also permitted to visit her with violent temptations and trying scruples, but she bore all with heroic patience and with a countenance radiant with joy. She could not bear to see any one look sad or downcast. "Why are you sad," she would say to such persons: "Fulfil all your duties with fidelity, and Jesus, who is perfect joy, will come into your heart and will make it leap for gladness."

Her family fell into straitened circumstances, and for twenty-four years Blessed Maria had to endure a cruel domestic persecution from a servant who tyrannised over her afflicted mistress in the most heartless manner; but the servant of God bore all with perfect sweetness. A true daughter of Saint Dominic, she ceased not to labour for souls, not only by her prayers, and sufferings, and penitential exercises, but also by her wise counsels. Multitudes flocked to pour out to her their trials and difficulties, and no one left her unconsoled. She had contrived to convert her sick-room into a sort of chapel, where the Holy Sacrifice was almost daily offered; and, though usually unable to move, she might often be seen during Mass raised in ecstasy, remaining sometimes for a long space with her arms outstretched in the form of a cross. She went to Confession every day, and during the last years of her life was refreshed almost daily with the Bread of Angels.

Her happy death took place on Whit-Tuesday, A.D. 1577. Her holy remains were laid to rest,

according to her own desire, in the church attached **May 28** to the Carmelite Convent of Saint Mary of the Angels, where she was held in great veneration. Seven years later, Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, then a young religious in that Convent, was miraculously cured of a dangerous illness through the intercession of Blessed Maria, to whom she ever afterwards bore a singular devotion. One day our Lord showed her Blessed Maria placed beside Saint Catharine of Siena in glory, and even raised somewhat higher than that great Saint, a circumstance which He explained by saying that Blessed Maria had laboured and suffered for the salvation of souls during a much longer space of time than Saint Catharine, who died at the early age of thirty-three. On another occasion the holy Carmelite beheld Blessed Maria holding in her hand some garments of exquisite whiteness, destined for those of her clients who were desirous of being clothed with purity of heart. She appeared to apply these garments to the open side of our Lord, when they assumed various hues in conformity with the special needs of the souls for whom they were intended, whether of humility, charity, or penance. Blessed Maria seemed to take the hearts of some of her clients as though to cleanse them; the hearts of some she opened, in order to render them more capable of receiving the Precious Blood; but she did this for those souls only who had earnestly begged this favour of her. It was revealed to Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi that Blessed Maria thus served as a channel of heavenly graces by reason of her admirable purity.

This special model of the sick and suffering was raised to the altars of the Church by Pope Pius VII. Her body, which is perfectly incorrupt, reposes at Florence, under a side altar in the Convent Church of Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, whither the

May 28 Carmelite nuns have been obliged to remove from their Convent of Saint Mary of the Angels.

Prayer

O God, the Lover of souls, who, in the person of Blessed Maria Bartolomea, Thy Virgin, didst unite a wonderful endurance of grievous diseases with an equal innocence of mind, grant that we, who are afflicted according as our actions deserve, may be refreshed with the comfort of Thy grace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 29

Blessed William and his Companions, the Martyrs of Avignonet

(A.D. 1242)

May 29 THE MARTYRS OF AVIGNONET were of the number of those who fell victims to the cruelty of the Albigenses in the South of France in the thirteenth century. In 1234, Blessed William Arnauld was appointed by Pope Gregory IX. Inquisitor of the Faith for the dioceses of Toulouse, Albi, Carcassonne, and Agen, the very territory which had been the scene of the labours of of his holy Patriarch, Saint Dominic, some twenty years previously. Blessed William's zeal in the discharge of his duties drew down upon him the special hatred of the heretics, and he and his Brethren were for a time driven from their Convent at Toulouse. They soon returned, however, and devoted themselves with renewed energy to their apostolic work, which was destined to win for some amongst them the glorious crown of martyrdom. A few days before this happy consummation of their labours, it pleased God to reveal

May 29

the coming event to a holy Friar, who was praying in the Convent at Bordeaux. He beheld in vision our crucified Saviour, and our Blessed Lady receiving in a golden chalice the blood which was streaming from the wounds of her Divine Son. Then, raising the chalice, she poured its contents on three religious, clad in the Dominican habit, who were humbly kneeling at her feet.

A similar revelation was made to one of the future martyrs, a Franciscan, Blessed Raymund Carbonier, who beheld descending from heaven a beautiful and radiant crown, adorned with eleven precious stones. This crown hung in the air over the building at Avignonet in which the martyrs were afterwards attacked. Blessed Raymund had no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the vision and hastened to communicate the glad tidings to Blessed William, who was at the head of the mission. The holy Inquisitor, who was at Prouille at the time, listened attentively to the story, and then cried out to his companions: "Know, my Brethren, that in a few days' time we shall be martyred for the faith of Jesus Christ." Then he immediately set out for Avignonet, a small town a few miles distant from Toulouse, at the head of his little company, which consisted of Blessed Bernard of Rochefort, a Friar Preacher, Blessed Garcia of Aure, a Dominican lay-brother, two Franciscans, the Prior of the Monastery of Saint Benedict at Avignonet, Raymund, Archdeacon of the Church of Toulouse, Bernard, a cleric of the same Church, two other clerics who acted as messengers, and a layman, a notary of the name of Peter. On reaching their destination, the missionaries began to preach with greater ardour than ever, and the enraged heretics met together and plotted their destruction.

Raymond of Alfaro, an infamous man, who then

May 29 ruled Avignonet in the name of the Count of Toulouse, invited the holy men into his castle, under pretext of friendship and reconciliation. When the eleven were assembled in a large hall which was used for administering justice, assassins, who had already been concealed on the premises, broke in upon them. The servants of God did not attempt to escape. Kneeling down, they intoned the *Te Deum*, and ceased not to sing till their voices were hushed in death. Some of the Catholics of the place managed, at the risk of their lives, to drag Blessed William Arnould and the Franciscan, Blessed Stephen of Narbonne, into the parish church, and claimed for them the privilege of sanctuary. But the infuriated heretics burst into the sacred edifice and struck their victims to the ground with redoubled blows, even carrying their cruelty so far as to tear out the tongue of Blessed William, by whose eloquence they had so often been put to confusion. This glorious martyrdom took place on the eve of the Ascension, May 29, A.D. 1242. Miraculous lights revealed to the Catholics the spot where the mangled remains had been thrown by the heretics, and made known far and near the triumph of the martyrs; and many miracles were worked by their intercession.

The parish church of Avignonet, in which the crime had been consummated, remained under interdict for the space of forty years. At the end of that time, the Albigensian heresy had almost entirely disappeared, and the people applied to Rome for permission to re-open the building. It was granted, and on the very day appointed for the solemn rite of reconciliation, the doors of the church, which had been closed with immense iron bars, broke open of themselves; and the bells, so long silent, rang out of their own accord, and continued to ring during an entire day and night. On entering the church, the people found within it a

beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin, which had never been seen there before, and which is held in veneration even to our own day; and later on, a Confraternity was established in honour of Our Lady of Avignonet. The principal festival of this Confraternity is on the first Tuesday in June; and on that day a touching ceremony takes place, called the Vow of Avignonet, said to owe its origin to a vow made by the inhabitants on occasion of the re-opening of their church. Persons of all ranks may be seen, holding lighted tapers in their hands, dragging themselves on their knees from the miraculous statue which stands at the bottom of the church to the steps of the sanctuary, where, over the High Altar, hangs a picture representing the death of the Martyrs. This ceremony is intended as a solemn act of reparation towards our Blessed Lady, so horribly blasphemed by the heretics, and towards the holy Martyrs, whose blood was shed on that spot.

The Martyrs of Avignonet were beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, for whose love and for the zeal of defending whose faith Blessed William and his companions fell beneath the swords of the wicked, grant, we beseech Thee, that through their intercession we may be firm in the faith and may always love Thee with our whole heart. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAY 31

Blessed James of Salomonio, Confessor

(A.D. 1231-1314)

BLESSED JAMES was born of rich and noble parents at Venice, in the year 1231. His father died shortly

May 29

May 31

May 31 after his birth and his mother retired into a Convent, intrusting the care of the child to his paternal grandmother, a holy widow, who brought him up very piously. A pretty and significant story is told of the early childhood of the little James. His grandmother once promised him some great reward if he would recite the Little Office of our Blessed Lady for a hundred consecutive days. At the end of the time the child appeared and claimed his promised reward. He received, however, nothing but a caress and a few words of praise, and his hoped-for treat was withheld or forgotten. The circumstance made a deep impression on his mind. He made a resolution to turn his back on human motives and human rewards, and continued to say the Office daily, not to please any earthly friend, but for the sole object of serving God and His Blessed Mother.

His patrimony, of which he was entire master, was very large, and he literally fulfilled our Lord's exhortation to the rich young man in the Gospel, by distributing the whole of it to the poor. He then presented himself at the Dominican Convent of Saints John and Paul, where he received the habit on his seventeenth birthday. Finding, however, that the visits of his relatives were a source of some distraction, after twenty years, he obtained leave from his Superiors to remove to the Convent of Forli, and there he spent the remainder of his long religious life, with the exception of the intervals passed at Faenza, San Severino, and Ravenna, where he filled the office of Sub-Prior.

The sanctity of Blessed James manifested itself chiefly in the perfection with which he observed his religious Rule. It was his constant study, and on his deathbed he mentioned as a subject for special thankfulness, that during five-and-twenty consecutive years

he had not above five times drunk between meals, **May 31** words which revealed also his spirit of mortification, as in the hot climate of Italy thirst is a far more frequent and painful source of suffering than in our northern land. It had evidently been the great thought of his life to sanctify himself through his Rule. We read also of his never being absent from the choral recitation of the Divine Office, either by day or by night, and of the singular beauty of his manner of discharging his choir duties, being a master in the art of chanting.

Blessed James had a special devotion to the recital of the Offices of those Saints who are not commemorated by the universal Church. Two holy martyrs, Saints Acisclus and Victoria, are venerated at Cordova, where a miracle is believed to be annually renewed in their honour. Their festival falls on the 17th November, and on that day fresh and beautiful roses are said always to blossom on the scene of their martyrdom. These saints are, however, little known save in Cordova. Blessed James loved to venerate them; and once, when he was walking in the country on their feast-day, meditating on their sufferings, a rose of exquisite beauty and fragrance suddenly bloomed before him, doubtless sent as a token of the Divine approval of his veneration for these blessed martyrs.

He made a pilgrimage to Rome to visit the many sanctuaries of the Eternal City. One day, going to Saint Sebastian's, the sacristan who kept the keys of the Catacombs was not to be found; but after praying for a few moments, Blessed James touched the iron bar, which was fastened by a padlock, the gates instantly opened of themselves, and he and his companions were enabled to satisfy their devotion. He had an earnest desire to say Mass in the chapel of the Scala Santa, known as the *Sancta Sanctorum*. As

May 31 many most precious relics are preserved in this chapel, strangers are hardly ever permitted to celebrate there; and Blessed James was told that his desire was an impossible one, since he was but a poor, unknown Friar. Trusting in the goodness of God, however, he went one morning to pray in this Sanctuary, having purposely omitted to say Mass before leaving his Convent. As he entered, he was accosted by the sacristan, who asked him if he were a priest and whether he had yet said Mass. On receiving his reply, "Then I pray you," said the sacristan, "to say it in the *Sancta Sanctorum*, for the priest who should by rights have done so has been prevented." Then Blessed James very gladly said his Mass, receiving very great consolation and thanking God for His wonderful goodness.

The fame of Blessed James as a Confessor was very great, both amongst his Brethren and seculars; he was commonly called the "Father of the Poor," and showed himself a wonderful consoler of the afflicted, to whom he was wont to say: "If you only knew how profitable sufferings are, you would ask our Lord to increase your sufferings, together with His grace."

During the last four years of his life he suffered from a terrible cancer, which caused him excruciating pain, but which for several months he kept concealed from the knowledge of all. He said his Office even to the last day of his life, and breathed forth his holy soul to God on the 31st of May, A.D. 1314, at the age of eighty-three, having spent sixty-six years in the religious life. He worked many miracles, both during his life and after his death, and the veneration paid to him was approved by Clement VII. (A.D. 1526), and also by subsequent Pontiffs.

Prayer

O God, who givest us joy in the annual solemnity of **May 31**
Blessed James, Thy Confessor, mercifully grant that
we may imitate his actions whose festival we now
celebrate. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JUNE 1**Blessed Alfonso Navarrete and his Com-
panions, the Martyrs of Japan**

(A.D. 1614-1643)

ON July 7th, A.D. 1867, just after the celebration of the **June 1**
eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of Saints Peter
and Paul, Pope Pius IX. solemnly beatified two hundred
and five martyrs who had suffered for the faith in
Japan at various dates during the persecution which
raged in that country between A.D. 1614 and A.D.
1643. Fifty-nine of these blessed martyrs belonged to
the Order of Saint Dominic; of these, some were
European missionaries, for the most part Spaniards
from the Philippine Islands, others native Friars, and
others again Tertiaries; fifty-eight more were members
of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. There
were also Jesuits, Franciscans, and Augustinians, and
numbers of native converts.

The first Dominican who laid down his life for the
faith in this persecution was the Blessed Father
Alfonso Navarrete, who for his heroic deeds of charity
has been termed the Saint Vincent de Paul of Japan.
He was captured by the pagans when on his way to
succour the afflicted Christians of Omura, an act which
was equivalent to offering himself for martyrdom.

June 1 After dragging him from one desert island to another, in order to find some spot where his execution might take place unknown to the Christians, the soldiers at length struck off his head as he knelt in prayer, holding his rosary and a blessed candle in one hand and a wooden cross in the other. His martyrdom took place on June 1st, A.D. 1617.

During the five years which ensued, numbers of missionaries and of native Christians fell into the hands of the persecutors, and were at length all imprisoned together at Omura. There were nine Dominicans, nine Franciscans, nine Jesuits, amongst whom was the famous Father Charles Spinola, and a few seculars. During their long and painful captivity, they kept up all the exercises of community life, rising at midnight to recite their Office, and celebrating as many Masses as they could at daybreak. They also imposed on themselves many fasts and other austerities, in addition to the sufferings which they had to undergo in their wretched prison. Yet so full of joy were they at the thought of suffering for the name of Christ, that Father Alfonso de Mena of the Order of Saint Dominic used to date his letters, "From this prison of Omura, the paradise of my delights." On September 9th, A.D. 1622, four-and-twenty of the prisoners were removed to Nangasaki, and on the following day were led out to the Holy Hill, consecrated twenty-five years before by the crucifixion of the twenty-six canonized martyrs of Japan. A Christian went before them, bearing the banner of the Confraternity of the Holy Name, whilst they followed joyfully, singing the Litanies and the *Te Deum*. Father Joseph of Saint Hyacinth addressed the crowds who had gathered together to witness the scene, exhorting them to be faithful to the devotion of the Holy Rosary, which would continue to instruct them when

their pastors should be no more. A stake was prepared for each of the martyrs, the horrible death of burning having been assigned to several of them. Another procession of native Christians from Nangasaki now joined them, clad in robes of ceremony and preceded by a Dominican Tertiary, clothed in the habit of the Order and carrying a cross. Some of them bore their little children in their arms. The victims numbered upwards of fifty; about half of them were sentenced to be burnt and the rest beheaded. June 1

The former were fastened to their stakes in such a way as to allow of their escaping, should they choose to save their lives by apostasy. The fire was applied slowly, so as to prolong their agony; but only two of the heroic company evinced any sign of being conscious of their sufferings. Both of them were young Japanese and implored the Governor to grant them a quicker death; but the boon was denied, and Blessed Paul Nangasci, a Dominican Tertiary, left his stake to lead them back to the altar of sacrifice. The Blessed Father Angelo Ferrer Orsucci was seen to rise gradually in a kneeling posture several feet above the flames, and thus continued for some time in ecstasy. One by one the Martyrs passed to their reward. The Blessed Father Hyacinth Orphanel lingered in agony for sixteen hours, expiring at length with the names of Jesus and Mary on his lips. This martyrdom is known in history as the Great Martyrdom. All the religious orders in Japan shared the triumph, but that of Saint Dominic was most numerous represented, offering to God on that day five of its priests, and three professed Brothers, besides numbers of Tertiaries and members of the Confraternity of the Rosary.

A few weeks previously the Blessed Father Lewis Florez had been executed at the instigation of the Dutch, on August 19th, and two days after the Great

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June 1 Martyrdom, three more Dominicans suffered death by fire. In the following year, A.D. 1623, on the 25th of August, the Blessed Father Peter Vasquez was burnt in company with four companions, singing the litanies in the midst of the flames. On July 26th, A.D. 1627, Blessed Father Lewis Bertrand, cousin and namesake of the great Saint Lewis Bertrand, was burnt with two native Friar Preachers. Next year the Blessed Father Dominic Castellet shared the same fate, in company with two Dominican lay-brothers and two Franciscans.

So fiercely did the persecution rage, and so fiendish were the measures taken for preventing the landing of fresh missionaries in the country, that at length the Japanese Christians were left without pastors and continued in that condition for two hundred years. Nevertheless, when, in our own days, the long closed Empire became once more accessible to Europeans, it was found to contain a considerable number of Christians who had preserved the form of baptism with the utmost accuracy, were well instructed in the essential doctrines of religion, and familiar with many of the prayers in common use among the faithful, and who still cherished with great veneration a picture representing the Fifteen Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. What stronger testimony can be alleged to the truth of the Catholic Church which could thus sustain its life, drawn from a Divine source, under circumstances that must have crushed any religion of human origin?

Prayer

O God, who grantest unto us to rejoice in the triumph of Thy Blessed Alfonso and his companions, grant us, we beseech Thee, through their merits and intercession, a like constancy in faith and perseverance in good works. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JUNE 2

**Blessed Sadoc and his Companions, the
Martyrs of Sandomir**

(A. D. 1260)

THROUGHOUT the whole of his apostolic career, the June 2
desire which lay nearest to the heart of Saint Dominic
appears to have been that of devoting himself to the
conversion of the Cumans, a savage horde who had
established themselves on the north-east of Hungary.
It was not God's will, however, that the Father and
Founder of the Friars Preachers should carry the light
of faith to these poor barbarians; the work which he
was not permitted himself to undertake was reserved
for his sons. In the General Chapter of A.D. 1221,
held only a few weeks before the death of the Saint,
Father Paul of Hungary, who had recently joined the
ranks of his disciples, was dispatched to found the
Order in the lands bordering on the Danube, having
as his companions Blessed Sadoc, who was of Scla-
vonic origin, and three others. When they reached
the confines of Hungary, Blessed Sadoc, praying dur-
ing the night, as was his custom, for the extension
of the Order and the success of their mission, saw
himself surrounded by a troop of demons, who cried
out: "Woe to us! You are come to snatch from
us our rights, to drive us from our possessions."
Then, pointing to the young novices recruited on the
way, the infernal visitants exclaimed in despairing
accents: "And must it be by mere children like these?
O what confusion!"

Father Paul eventually realised his holy Patriarch's
desire and won a martyr's crown among the Cumans;

June 2 and Blessed Sadoc, who had shared his labours for several years, became Prior of the Convent of Sandomir in Poland. In the year 1260, this town was attacked by a fierce horde of Tartars, led on and encouraged by those inveterate enemies of the Polish nation, the Russians, who, finding the place strongly defended and almost impregnable, treacherously proposed a suspension of hostilities. During the night previous to this truce, the Community had assembled to sing Matins and Lauds. At the conclusion of the Office, one of the novices going out according to custom into the middle of the Choir to sing the Martyrology (*i.e.* the list of the Saints to be commemorated on the morrow) saw in the place of the book where he should begin, these words in letters of gold: "At Sandomir the passion of forty - nine Martyrs." The novice was greatly perplexed at the sight; nevertheless he mastered his emotion, and, to use the words of the old chronicler, "with the simplicity of a dove and the voice of a swan sang out to the Brethren the words which he saw before him." The astonished Prior desired the novice to bring the book to him, and the miraculous inscription was distinctly seen by the entire Community. Then the holy Prior, filled with the Spirit of God, counted his Friars, and found that with himself they numbered exactly forty-nine. "Brethren," he exclaimed, "these words are for us; and doubtless it is the Tartars who will open for us the gates of heaven; and that to-morrow. Now, therefore, all that remains for us to do is to prepare by confession and by a devout reception of the Bread of Angels for our happy martyrdom." The religious listened to him with tears of joy and thankfulness. Not knowing when the destined hour might be, they immediately got ready for Confession, and spent the remainder of the night in prayer and in calm

preparation for the morning's Communion and for a June 2 holy death.

At daybreak, they all approached the Holy Table, with wonderful peace in their breasts, knowing that to them it was indeed to be the Viaticum. As the day wore on and no signs of the expected barbarians appeared, they fulfilled their accustomed offices and duties, yet with a sweet impatience for the hour of deliverance.

At length, at the hour of Compline, they went to the Choir to offer up the last act of worship they should be called on to render in this life. They sang that office with unusual solemnity and gladness, and at its conclusion went out into the body of the church in procession, as the manner is in our Order, to sing the *Salve*. As they were sweetly entoning this Antiphon to the Blessed Mother of God, a band of Tartars, traitorously admitted into the city by the treacherous Russians, burst into the church and cut them all to pieces. One of the Friars was seized with the impulse to flee and succeeded in hiding himself in the belfry ; but (we quote again from the old Chronicle), "perceiving that the mangled bodies of his companions, whose souls were now singing Alleluias in heaven, continued, though dead, to chant that sweet melody of the *Salve*, he regained courage, offered himself of his own accord to the swords of the barbarians, and went to join his fortunate Brethren in the courts of Paradise. Thus they died, like heavenly swans, whose death-songs were the sweet praises of their Mother Mary, and doubtless her virginal hands very lovingly crowned them with the garland of immortality."

From this time the custom was introduced into the Order of singing the *Salve* at the death-bed of its members, in order to beseech Mary to change the

June 2 labours and trials of this vale of tears into the eternal possession of the blessed fruit of her womb.

These blessed Martyrs were beatified by Pius VII.

Prayer

Mayest Thou be revealed to us after this exile, O Lord Jesus, by Thy merciful and tender Mother, the Virgin Mary, whom Blessed Sadoc and his companions saluted with unceasing voice amidst the assaults of the infidels their enemies, deserving to receive from Thee the desired palm of martyrdom. Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

JUNE 4

Translation of the Relics of Saint Peter, Martyr

(A.D. 1340)

June 4 AFTER the death of this glorious champion of the faith, Heaven was pleased to attest his sanctity by countless miracles in every part of Christendom, and the Sovereign Pontiffs vied with each other in doing honour to his memory. The first translation of his holy remains took place during the Provincial Chapter within a year of his martyrdom. The body on this as well as on subsequent occasions was found perfectly incorrupt. It was laid in a sarcophagus, the gift of the Abbot of San Simpliciano, who had not forgotten the words pronounced by the Saint a few years previously, when, pointing out the block of marble of which it was made, he had said, "That would make a famous tomb for a martyr." The municipality of Milan surrounded the shrine with a balustrade of exquisite workmanship.

When Saint Thomas Aquinas passed through Milan in the year 1262, he wrote an epitaph in verse which was engraved on marble by the side of the Martyr's tomb. June 4

A yet more splendid shrine, a masterpiece of sculpture, carved by Balducci of Pisa, out of white Carrara marble, and supported on eight pilasters of red Verona marble, was raised to the honour of the champion of the faith in the following century, and the sacred remains were transferred to it during the General Chapter held at Milan in the year 1340. Many miracles were worked on this occasion, and the Fathers of the Order very reluctantly yielded to the request of John Visconti, Archbishop of Milan, and gave him the head of the holy Martyr, which he enclosed in a silver tabernacle. Not long after, the prelate was seized with violent pain in the head, which no remedy could relieve. The Friars were not slow to put their own interpretation on this circumstance; they told the Archbishop that Saint Peter wished that his head should be restored to the keeping of his own Brethren, and this was accordingly done. The Saint himself appeared to a pious Florentine resident in Milan, and bade him build a chapel wherein his head might be kept in great veneration. His commands were obeyed, and a magnificent chapel was erected, adjoining the apse, in the Dominican Church of San Eustorgio, wherein the body of the Martyr reposed.

Some alterations in the church necessitated a fresh translation of the sacred remains in the year 1736. They were then removed to the chapel which had been built, as we have seen, for the reception of the head. In our own day San Eustorgio has, alas! been taken away from the Order, and has become an ordinary parish church.

Prayer

June 4 Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we may imitate with due devotion the faith of Blessed Peter, Thy Martyr, who, for the extension of that same faith, was made worthy to obtain the palm of martyrdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JUNE**Blessed Diana, Cecilia, and Amata, Virgins**

(13th Century)

June 9 ON this day are jointly commemorated three of our Holy Father Saint Dominic's eldest spiritual daughters, who appear to have been singularly dear to him. Blessed Diana was a member of the noble family of D'Andalo, and it was she who persuaded her father and grandfather to make over to the Friars Preachers their rights over the Church of Saint Nicholas at Bologna, and to give them land for the site of a Convent. Despising the pomps and vanities of the world, she placed herself under the spiritual direction of Blessed Reginald, who, on his departure for Paris, confided her to the care of the holy Patriarch, Saint Dominic, and in his presence and that of Blessed Reginald, Blessed Guala, the Community of Saint Nicholas, and many noble ladies of Bologna, Diana bound herself by the vows of religion, though permitted for a time to remain in her father's house. There she led a life of penance and devotion, earnestly longing for the day when a Convent for religious women of the Order should be founded in her native city.

Saint Dominic entrusted the execution of this design

to four of the principal Fathers at Bologna, charging June 9 them to begin it without waiting for the completion of their own Priory. Many difficulties, however, arose, and Blessed Diana had to encounter the most determined opposition on the part of her family. She fled for refuge to a neighbouring Monastery, whence she was dragged with such violence as to fracture one of her ribs. After remaining a prisoner in her father's house for nearly a year, during which Saint Dominic consoled her by his letters, she again escaped to the same Convent, where this time she was suffered to remain until the new Convent of Saint Agnes was ready for her reception. This was not until after the death of Saint Dominic.

During the Octave of the Ascension, A.D. 1223, Blessed Jordan, who had succeeded our Holy Father in the government of the Order, installed Blessed Diana and some other noble maidens of Bologna in their new home; and a few weeks later, on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, he gave them the habit and afterwards admitted them to profession. To train them in religious life and in the ceremonies of the Order, he summoned four of the nuns from Saint Sixtus in Rome, and amongst them the Blessed Cecilia and Amata, the former of whom belonged to the noble family of the Cesarini, and had joined the Community in the Trastevere, which our Holy Father was commissioned to reform. When they were transferred to the Convent of Saint Sixtus, Cecilia, then only seventeen, was the first to throw herself at the feet of the Saint to beg for the habit of the Order. She now, at the age of twenty-three, became the first Prioress of the new Monastery at Bologna.

Of her companion, Blessed Amy or Amata, no particulars have been preserved. Some authors have believed her to be identical with the possessed woman

June 9 who disturbed Saint Dominic's sermon at Saint Sixtus a few days after the profession of the nuns, and who was by him delivered from her tormentor and admitted into the Community, the Saint himself bestowing on her the sweet name of Amata, or "the Beloved." But, as it has been proved that this Sister went on pilgrimage to Saint James of Compostella at a date when the four Sisters from Saint Sixtus were already settled at Bologna, the theory in question is untenable.

Blessed Jordan watched with paternal tenderness over the young Community at Saint Agnes's, whose fervour in penitential exercises he found himself obliged to moderate. He often consoled them by his letters, and commended himself and the success of his preaching to their prayers.

Blessed Diana lived in the Order for thirteen years in great humility and love of poverty, and in such fervour of spirit as frequently by her burning words to move the Sisters to tears of devotion. She happily departed to her Spouse on the 10th of June, A.D. 1236.

Blessed Cecilia lived to extreme old age. To her we are indebted for a most graphic and beautiful account of our Holy Father's life at Saint Sixtus and Santa Sabina. She died in the odour of sanctity A.D. 1290, and was buried in the same tomb with Blessed Diana and Amata. Their remains have been twice discovered and honourably translated. Pope Leo XIII. has approved of the veneration paid to these holy Virgins, and given permission for their Mass and Office to be celebrated in the Archdiocese of Bologna and throughout the Dominican Order.

Prayer

O God, who didst endow Thy blessed Virgin Diana with admirable fortitude of spirit, and didst give her Blessed Cecilia and Amata as companions in treading

the path of Evangelical perfection, grant that we may **June 9**
be strengthened in difficulties by their example and
protected by their help in adversities. Through Christ
our Lord. Amen.

JUNE 10

**Blessed John Dominici, Bishop
and Confessor**

(A.D. 1350-1420)

BLESSED JOHN DOMINICI was born at Florence **June 10**
about A.D. 1350. He was of humble parentage and
imperfect education, and had, moreover, an impediment
in his speech, so that his first application for admission
into the Order of Saint Dominic was refused. He
persevered in his request, however, and was received
when about eighteen years of age. It was observed,
that, in assuming the habit, he seemed to acquire a
marvellous nobility of manner; his talents were found
to be of the highest order, and he was soon held in
great repute for his extraordinary eloquence. Earnestly
desiring to devote himself to the ministry of the word,
the special office of his Order, he implored the inter-
cession of Saint Catharine of Siena that he might be
delivered from the impediment of speech which had
hitherto prevented him from preaching. His petition
was granted; and from that time he became one of the
most renowned preachers of the day; so much so, that,
when Saint Vincent Ferrer was invited to preach at
Florence, he excused himself on the plea, that, as the
city possessed so eloquent an orator as Father John
Dominici, there could be no need of him. Blessed
John received yet another favour through the inter-
cession of Saint Catharine; for, being at Rome in the

June 10 Jubilee year and unable by reason of a bad foot to make the visits to the four Basilicas required for gaining the Indulgences, he had recourse to the Seraphic Virgin of Siena, whom he had seen in his youth, and was at once entirely delivered from his infirmity. He was intimately associated with her Confessors and other Fathers who had been her disciples, and he took a leading part in the reform of the Order set on foot by Blessed Raymund of Capua, who appointed him Vicar Provincial of the Roman Province. Later on, we find him endeavouring to restore regular life in the various important Convents of which he was successively superior, and founding a house of strict observance at Fiesole, near Florence, where he gave the habit to Saint Antoninus and to the two artists, Fra Angelico and Fra Benedetto. Blessed John was himself an artist of no mean talent and enriched the choral books of his Convent with beautiful miniatures. He rightly regarded art as a means of instructing the young and the ignorant in the truths of religion and of raising the mind to heavenly aspirations. With this view he greatly encouraged its cultivation both among the Friars and the religious women of the Order.

But Blessed John's title to the gratitude of the faithful in general is chiefly based on the important part which he had in the extinction of the great Schism of the West, which for nearly half a century had divided the allegiance of Christendom. Created Archbishop of Ragusa and Cardinal by Pope Gregory XII., he had a large share in the convocation of the Council of Constance, at which he assisted as that Pontiff's Legate. The great object of the Council was to obtain the resignation of all three claimants of the pontifical dignity, in order that the Fathers might then proceed to the valid election of one, to whose lawful claims none could offer opposition. Blessed John succeeded

in inducing John XXIII. to offer his resignation on condition Pope Gregory should also resign. The anti-pope little knew that the holy Cardinal held the formal resignation of that Pontiff in his hand, and was thunderstruck when he immediately produced it. Then, laying aside his Cardinal's hat, Blessed John added these words: "And I, who came as that Pontiff's Legate, also renounce my dignity and my cardinalate;" and so saying he took his place among the Bishops. The Fathers of the Council insisted, however, on restoring him to his rank. The remaining anti-pope, Benedict XIII., better known as Peter de Luna, was deposed; and the Council proceeded to elect Odo Colonna, who took the title of Martin V. The vigour and disinterestedness shown by Blessed John at that crisis restored peace to the Church.

At the request of the Emperor, the holy man was now sent as Apostolic Legate to Hungary and to Bohemia, then much disturbed by the heretical followers of John Huss and Jerome of Prague. In this mission he did much to confirm the people in their adhesion to the true faith and to encourage them in offering a determined resistance to the encroachments of the Turks. Whilst thus engaged, he fell sick at Buda, and, strengthened by the holy Sacraments of the Church, piously fell asleep in the Lord on the 10th June, A.D. 1420, leaving behind him many learned writings. His tomb was desecrated by the Turks when they took and sacked Buda. He was beatified by Gregory XVI.

Prayer

O God, the bestower of divine love, who didst strengthen Blessed John, Thy Confessor and Bishop, for the work of preserving the Unity of the Church and

June 10 establishing regular discipline; grant, through his intercession, that we may all be of one mind and do all our actions in Christ Jesus our Lord. Who liveth and reigneth with Thee world without end. Amen.

JUNE 12

Blessed Stephen Bandelli, Confessor

(A.D. 1369-1450)

June 12 BLESSED STEPHEN was born about A.D. 1369, at Castelnuovo in the north-west of Italy, and entered the Order of Saint Dominic at an early age. He was a model of prayer and penance, and of every religious virtue, and excelled also in learning, becoming an eminent canonist and theologian, and teaching with great fruit in the University of Pavia. But his chief renown was as a preacher, and for many years he devoted himself to this ministry with such success, that many hesitated not to compare him to the Apostle Saint Paul. The people flocked round his pulpit, and he drew an almost countless multitude of sinners to repentance, and induced many to forsake the vanities of the world and embrace the religious state. God confirmed his preaching by a great number of miracles. It is much to be regretted that so few details have been preserved of the life of this holy man, who evidently occupied a very distinguished position in his own day.

Worn out by labour and old age, Blessed Stephen died at the Convent of Saluzzo on June 11, A.D. 1450; and the multitude of pictures and ex-votos hung around his tomb testify to the many graces granted through his intercession. In the year 1487, the city of Saluzzo was besieged and on the point of falling

into the hands of the enemy, when it was miraculously delivered by the appearance on the ramparts of our Blessed Lady and a Dominican Friar, universally believed to be Blessed Stephen. The anniversary of this wonderful deliverance is still commemorated at Saluzzo by an annual festival. Blessed Stephen Bandelli was beatified by Pius IX. June 12

Prayer

O God, who didst make Blessed Stephen, Thy Confessor, an eminent preacher of the Gospel for calling back wanderers to the path of salvation, grant us, by his intercession, that, delivered from all our sins, we may ever run in the way of Thy commandments. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JUNE 18

Blessed Osanna, Virgin

(A.D. 1449-1505)

BLESSED OSANNA was born of wealthy and honourable parents at Mantua, in the north of Italy, A.D. 1449. When she was only six years old, the family went to spend the summer in the country. One day as little Osanna was wandering alone in the meadows by the river-side, an angel appeared to her and instructed her in the love of God, saying to her: "See how every creature proclaims with all its might, 'Love God, all ye dwellers on the earth, for He hath made all things in order to win your love.'" Soon afterwards our Lord Himself met her on the same spot in the form of a lovely child, with a crown of thorns upon His head, and bearing on His shoulders a heavy cross. "My beloved child," said He to Osanna, "I am the June 18

June 18 Son of the Virgin Mary and thy Creator. I have always loved children, because their hearts are pure. I willingly admit virgins as My spouses ; I guard their virginity ; and when they call upon me with the words, 'O Good Jesus,' I instantly come to their assistance." This vision was the call to Osanna to follow her Divine Spouse in the path of His sufferings, and she responded to it by an act of entire consecration of herself to His will.

It was her ardent desire to dedicate herself solemnly to God's service in some monastery ; but, after many negotiations for this object had failed, it was revealed to her that she was not to enter the cloister, but to sanctify herself in the world as a Tertiary of our Holy Order. This determination caused great grief to her parents ; nor was it until a dangerous illness had brought her to the brink of the grave that they would consent to her receiving the habit, which she at last did at the age of fourteen. It was not, however, permitted to her for a long series of years to make her solemn profession. She constantly longed for this happiness, but, understanding that the obstacles which were continually raised against it were ordained by God for her greater perfection, she humbly submitted herself to His Divine will. It was not until she had attained the age of fifty-five, that, in the last year of her life, she at length publicly bound herself by the vows of religion. She had, however, at the time of her clothing, made a private vow of obedience, and would never do the slightest thing without the leave of those who were placed over her.

Blessed Osanna was favoured with continual raptures and ecstasies in prayer, which she was unable to conceal from the busy eye of the curious, and these heavenly favours were made a constant subject of reproof and persecution. The other Tertiaries persisted

in regarding them as nothing but a voluntary affectation of sanctity, and threatened to deprive her of the habit unless they ceased. They also murmured greatly because, as the fame of her sanctity spread, persons of rank thronged about her to ask her counsel or to gratify their curiosity. But Osanna's patience and humility were never in the least disturbed. Her Divine Spouse had made known to her, as in earlier times to Saint Catharine of Siena, and later to Blessed Margaret Mary, the secret of His Heart; and we are expressly told that it was to that never-failing fountain of consolation that she had recourse whenever tribulation pressed heavily upon her. And, when prevented from approaching the Sacrament of Penance as often as she would have wished, she confessed her daily frailties to her good Jesus, as she loved to call Him.

The nuptials with the Beloved of her soul, which she so ardently desired to accomplish by her profession, and which were in that manner delayed for so many years, were mystically solemnized in the presence of the Mother of God and the whole court of Heaven. This and other spiritual favours more and more increased the fire of Divine love which burnt within her and filled her with an equally ardent desire to suffer. Grieving that she could not be more conformed to the likeness of her crucified Lord, she one day cast herself at His feet, exclaiming: "O my only Love! Must the thorns then be for Thee alone; for Thee alone the nails and the cross; and for me sweetness and consolation? Ah! not so. I will not share Thy glory unless Thou make me also share Thy pains." And thus for two years she incessantly besought the Eternal Goodness to grant her that which her soul longed after, a conformity of suffering. Then at length the crown of thorns was granted to her, and,

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June 18

June 18 later on, the sacred Stigmata. At each of these heavenly favours, the agony of her mortal frame increased to an almost inconceivable extent; yet still she was not satisfied. A longing arose in her heart to share in those unknown and awful sufferings which filled the heart of Jesus whilst He hung upon the Cross. Then, in answer to her prayer, her Divine Spouse plunged into her loving heart a long and terrible nail. The agony of this transfixion must have caused her death, had not the same Divine hand relieved her; but this cutting and dividing of her heart was often repeated in after years, in answer to her unsatisfied entreaties. During this life of mysterious suffering, Osanna ceased not to labour for the souls of others by prayer and works of charity, and often offered her body and soul to God to receive the chastisement due to inveterate sinners or to the poor souls in purgatory.

Her approaching death was announced to her four years previously by Blessed Columba of Rieti, who appeared to her in great glory at the moment of her own departure out of this life.

The death of Blessed Osanna took place on the 18th of June, A.D. 1505. Three years afterwards her body was still incorrupt. Leo X. gave permission for her feast to be celebrated in the diocese of Mantua, and this privilege was extended to the Dominican Order by Innocent XII.

Prayer

Graciously hear us, O God our Saviour, that, as we rejoice in celebrating the memory of Blessed Osanna Thy Virgin, we may be instructed likewise in all feelings of tender devotion. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JUNE 22

Blessed Innocent V., Pope and Confessor

(A.D. 1225-1276)

BLESSED INNOCENT V., known before his elevation June 22 to the Papacy by the name of Peter of Tarantaise, was born of noble parents at that town, situated at the foot of the Alps, on the confines of Savoy, a territory then dependent on the Dukes of Burgundy, about A.D. 1225. Whilst still quite a child, he was sent to study at the University of Paris, where he received the Dominican habit from the hands of Blessed Jordan, the second Master-General of the Order of Preachers, when only nine years old. He is believed to have been one of those young postulants admitted on occasion of the General Chapter of 1234. To the remonstrances of the capitular Fathers, who complained that these children were so ignorant of Latin as scarcely to be able to read a lesson of Matins even after much previous preparation, the holy Master-General gently replied: "Suffer these little ones to come, and forbid them not. Know that you will see many, yea, most of them, acquit themselves gloriously of the office of preaching; and God will make use of them for the work of saving souls, in preference to many others of cultured mind." In none was this prophecy more brilliantly fulfilled than in little Peter of Tarantaise. To extraordinary beauty of person he joined the highest gifts of mind and heart; and in the shadow of the cloister, like the child Jesus in the holy house at Nazareth, he daily "grew in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men." When only twenty-eight, he was judged capable of teaching theology in the University at the same

June 22 time as his intimate friend, Saint Thomas Aquinas; and we are particularly told that his merit was not in the least eclipsed by that of the Angel of the Schools. He also composed Commentaries on the Four Books of the Sentences of Peter the Lombard and on Holy Scripture, and other learned works, which in their day were scarcely less prized than those of Saint Thomas himself. Hence, in the year 1259, he was chosen with Blessed Albert the Great, Saint Thomas, and two other distinguished religious, to draw up a general plan of studies to be followed in all Dominican schools.

At the age of forty, his rare prudence, his knowledge of men, his admirable meekness, and his invincible firmness, caused him to be elected Provincial of his Order in the Province of France, which then numbered some fifty Convents. His journeys in the visitation of his Province were always made on foot, with the simplicity of a poor Friar; he everywhere diffused the good odour of his virtues and kept alive primitive fervour and zeal for souls in the hearts of his Brethren. Meanwhile, the masters and students at the University of Paris, who deeply regretted his absence, earnestly begged to have him back amongst them. The General Chapter of the Order granted their petition, and Father Peter returned to Paris, where he took his doctor's degree and succeeded Saint Thomas at the head of the School. In the year 1269, however, he was re-elected Provincial. Three years later, Blessed Gregory X., who then filled the Chair of Saint Peter and who had formerly been one of his pupils at Paris, appointed him Archbishop of Lyons and Primate of France. A few months later he raised him to the dignity of Cardinal at the same time as the great Franciscan, Saint Bonaventure, and made him Bishop of Ostia and Velletri and Dean of the sacred

College, commanding him to continue the administration of the Archdiocese of Lyons until the nomination of his successor in that see. June 22

The saintly Pontiff employed the new Cardinal to assist him in making preparations for the General Council which he had convoked at Lyons, for the purpose of effecting a re-union between the Greek and Latin Churches, and organising a fresh Crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land. The Council opened on May 7, A.D. 1274. Cardinal Peter of Tarantaise took a distinguished part in its proceedings and displayed an extraordinary talent for business. He was specially charged with all that concerned the re-union of the Greeks with the Latins, and succeeded in inducing the ambassadors of the Greek Emperor to submit to the faith and authority of the Roman Church. It fell to his lot to preach the funeral sermon of his friend and colleague, Saint Bonaventure, who died at Lyons during the Council; and he did so with a touching eloquence which caused the whole of his audience to mingle their tears with his own.

In January, A.D. 1276, Blessed Gregory X. died, and Cardinal Peter of Tarantaise was unanimously elected as his successor, assuming the name of Innocent V. The holy man immediately set himself to labour zealously for the peace of Christendom, the repression of the Moors, who were threatening a fresh invasion of Spain, the acceptance by the Greeks of the adhesion of their ambassadors to reunion with the Roman Church, and the undertaking of a fresh Crusade against the infidels. Such splendid beginnings excited the greatest hopes for the new Pontificate, but it was doomed to be of brief duration. On June 22nd, an attack of malignant fever closed the holy Pontiff's career; he had sat in the Chair of Peter only five months and two days. He was laid to rest in the

June 22 Lateran Basilica, and rendered himself illustrious by a host of miracles. Pope Leo XIII. raised him to the Altars of the Church, A.D. 1898.

Prayer

O God, who didst adorn Blessed Innocent, Confessor and Pope, with the gifts of knowledge and prudence, and didst make him a promoter of peace and unity, grant us through his intercession to seek the things that are above, and with one accord to strive after all good. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 3

Blessed Mark of Modena, Confessor

(A.D. 1498)

July 3 VERY few details concerning the life of this holy servant of God have been preserved. He was born at Modena, and entered the Order of Preachers at an early age. Taking his holy Father, Saint Dominic, as the model of his life, he devoted himself to prayer and contemplation, practised severe austerities, and was most exact even in the smallest observances prescribed by the Constitutions. He became renowned for sacred science, and preached the Word of God with much fruit of souls in various parts of Italy. He also wrote some useful spiritual books. Becoming Prior of the Convent of Pesaro, he was a beautiful example of every religious virtue to his Community, and was venerated by the people as a Saint.

On one occasion he was sent for by a lady who had just lost a little son of only three or four years old. "Weep not," said he to the afflicted mother; "your little one is in heaven. Do not wish to have him

back again, for you would lose him a second time, and in a more distressing manner." But as the lady would not listen to reason, the servant of God betook himself to prayer. Then, taking the child by the hand, he cried out in a loud voice: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, arise." The child instantly sat up, and Blessed Mark restored him to his mother full of health and vigour. But ten years later he died of the plague in much suffering.

After undergoing immense labours for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, full of merits and good works, and worn out by age and sickness, Blessed Mark slept the sleep of the just, pressing to his heart as he died the image of his crucified Master, whom he had tenderly loved throughout his whole life. His holy and happy death took place on the 21st of September, A.D. 1498. Later on, his remains were translated to the Chapel of the Holy Rosary, on which occasion a delicious odour perfumed the church, and the bells rang out miraculously to the wonder of all. It became customary to expose his relics to public veneration every year on Whit-Monday, and lamps were kept burning day and night before his picture, which hung beside his tomb. Pius IX. set the seal of the Church to the veneration which had thus been rendered to Blessed Mark from time immemorial.

Prayer

O God, who by the ministry of Blessed Mark, Thy Confessor, didst lead back many wanderers to the path of justice, grant that we also, through his intercession, being set free from our vices, may be able happily to attain to eternal joys. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 7

Blessed Benedict XI., Pope and Confessor

(A.D. 1240-1304)

July 7 NICHOLAS BOCCASINO, who assumed the name of Benedict XI. when raised to the Pontifical dignity, was born of poor parents at Treviso in Italy, A.D. 1240. He received his early education from an uncle, who held the office of parish priest, and at the age of fourteen he was admitted into the Dominican Order at Venice. The next fourteen years of his life were devoted to prayer and study, after which he was employed in teaching sacred science to his Brethren. He never allowed his lessons to interfere with his exercises of piety or to prevent him from teaching the Word of God; and he also found time to write some learned commentaries on various parts of Scripture, and other valuable works.

After successively filling the offices of Sub-Prior and Prior and that of Provincial of Lombardy, he was unanimously elected General of the Order, A.D. 1296. During the two years and a half that he held this charge, the holy General ceased not to visit the Convents of the Order, always travelling on foot and encouraging his companions to face danger and fatigue by exclaiming: "Come, dearest Brethren, this is the glory of our Order." Rigid and austere to himself, he was the gentlest of religious Superiors towards his subjects. Contemporary historians call him "the lover of the Community," and are never weary of praising his virtues, and above all, his singular humility of heart.

In January A.D. 1299, Pope Boniface VIII., whose

cause he had stoutly defended, created him Cardinal Priest of the title of Santa Sabina. "Holy Father," he exclaimed; throwing himself at the Pope's feet, "why have you laid so heavy a burden upon me?" "God has a yet heavier one in store for you," was the prophetic reply. Two years later, he was promoted to the bishopric of Ostia and Velletri, made Dean of the Sacred College, and sent as Legate to Hungary, which was at that time in a very disturbed condition. On his return to Italy, he found the Pope surrounded by enemies, the creatures of Philip the Fair of France, and had the glory of standing by the Holy Father's side at Anagni in company with only one other Cardinal, when he was brutally assaulted and dragged from his throne. The Cardinal of Santa Sabina succeeded in stirring up the inhabitants of Anagni to expel the sacrilegious rebels from their town, but the Pope did not long survive the outrages he had received, dying almost immediately after his return to Rome.

The Cardinals assembled in conclave eleven days after the death of Boniface, and unanimously elected Cardinal Nicholas Boccasino as his successor, A.D. 1303. He assumed the name of Benedict out of veneration for his predecessor, who had borne that name before his elevation to the Papacy, and took for his motto those words of the Psalmist: "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant" (Ps. cxviii. 135). Europe was in a very troubled state at the commencement of the new Pontificate; but the admirable prudence and energy of the Pontiff did much for the restoration of peace and order. In particular, he succeeded in reconciling France with the Holy See and in restoring the Papal authority in Sicily and Denmark; and he greatly exerted himself to induce the princes of Christendom to lay aside their mutual differences and engage in a crusade against the infidels.

July 7 Shortly after his elevation to the Pontifical throne, his mother came to pay him a visit. The magistrates of Perugia, where he was then residing, on hearing of her arrival, received her with great pomp, arrayed her in costly apparel, and conducted her to the Papal presence. But, when the Holy Pontiff saw his mother richly dressed and accompanied by a splendid retinue, he refused to recognise her, saying: "My mother was only a poor washerwoman, and not a princess like this." Then she retired, laid aside her silk garments, and returned in the humble garb of a peasant woman. When Benedict saw her thus, he came down from his throne to meet her, embraced her tenderly, and showed her every mark of respect and affection.

Benedict's reign, marked with vigour, justice, and clemency, unhappily lasted only eight months. His death, which took place at Perugia on the 7th of July, A.D. 1304, was believed to be the effect of poison, given him in some figs which had been presented to him by an unknown person. He was buried in the church of his Order at Perugia, and many miracles were worked at his tomb. He was beatified by Pope Clement XII.

Prayer

O God, who by the grace of Thy benediction didst raise the Blessed Benedict, Thy chief Bishop, to heaven, sanctify Thy people, we beseech Thee, with a new benediction of Thy grace, and, through his prayers and merits, defend us by Thy power from all the evils that threaten us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 9

**Saint John of Cologne and his Companions,
the Martyrs of Gorcum**

(A.D. 1572)

THE holy champions of the faith whom the Church **July 9** honours under the title of the Martyrs of Gorcum, suffered for the faith in Holland, A.D. 1572. At that time, the whole country was overrun by the Calvinists, who had rebelled alike against the dominion of Spain and the authority of the Church. They succeeded in making themselves masters of the town of Gorcum and caused all the clergy and religious of the place to be cast into prison. Father John of Cologne, of the Order of Preachers, having obtained permission of his Superiors to minister to the wants of the faithful, thus bereft of all spiritual assistance, was then exercising the functions of parish priest in the neighbouring village of Hornar, and was in the habit of visiting Gorcum for the purpose of administering the Sacraments. On one of these occasions, having undertaken the journey in order to baptize an infant, he was seized and imprisoned with the others. Every cruelty which their inhuman enemies could devise was resorted to in order to induce the captives to renounce their faith, especially with regard to the real presence of our Lord in the Holy Eucharist and the Papal supremacy, or to tempt them at least to some act of disobedience to the Church's laws. After keeping them for some time without food, nothing but meat was set before them, the day purposely chosen being Friday. All the prisoners except one preferred running the risk of starvation to disobeying the precept of the Church; and the one

July 9 who yielded was not of the number of those nineteen who afterwards obtained the crown of martyrdom. The soldiers presented a loaded pistol at the mouth of Nicholas Poppel, the second parish priest of Gorcum, bidding him now, if he dared, profess that faith which he had been wont to preach so boldly. The servant of God, nothing daunted, made an open profession of his belief; then, thinking his last moments had come, he cried out with a loud voice: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." His tormentors contented themselves for the present, however, with hanging him up and letting him fall again repeatedly, till he was half-strangled. They inflicted the same cruelty on Nicholas Pick, the Father Guardian of the Franciscans; and, when the rope broke and he fell apparently lifeless to the ground, they applied lighted candles to his head and face, from the effects of which, when he afterwards revived, he suffered great agony. The soldiers repeatedly beat their victims in the most barbarous manner, not even sparing one of the Friars who was decrepit from extreme old age, and who, at every blow that he received, answered only: "Thanks be to God." They took away nearly all their clothes, leaving them exposed to the cold night-air almost without covering.

After a cruel captivity of about ten days, the prisoners were removed by water to Bril, suffering innumerable insults and hardships during the passage. On their arrival, they were made to walk in procession through the town and round the gallows erected in the market-place. The holy martyrs sang, as they went along, the Litanies, the *Salve Regina*, the *Te Deum*, and the *Stabat Mater*, amidst the mockery and the blasphemies of the spectators. They were then thrown into a dark and loathsome dungeon, where a secular priest and two Fathers of the Premonstratensian Order were joined to their number.

Meantime the relations of the Father Guardian, July 9 themselves infected with heretical opinions, were making every effort to obtain his liberation and that of the other prisoners, since, like a good shepherd, he steadily refused to accept his own release, unless his Brethren also might be set free together with him. Life and liberty were accordingly offered to all the prisoners, on the sole condition of renouncing their allegiance to the Pope; and, when they indignantly rejected the infamous proposal, a hasty order was given for their execution. During the night between the 8th and 9th of July, they were led to a large barn outside the town, making their confessions to one another as they went. In this place they were all hanged, to the number of nineteen, namely, one Dominican, eleven Franciscans, two Premonstratensians (one of whom had previously fallen from the faith, but had made generous reparation for his fall), one Canon Regular of Saint Augustine, and four secular priests. The history of one of these last also presented a signal instance of the mercy of God and of His secret judgments; for he had led a scandalous life, which he expiated by the heroism of his death; whereas another parish priest of irreproachable life, who had been arrested with him, failed in courage and perseverance and missed the martyr's crown. Another of the sufferers, an old man of seventy, Godfrey Duneus by name, was half-witted, yet he endured his captivity with extraordinary courage and generosity; and when at the last moment, by reason of his infirmity of mind, he was unconditionally offered his liberty, he refused, exclaiming: "I see the heavens open! I long to be with my brethren." And, the last of that heroic band, he passed to his reward.

After the death of the martyrs, the soldiers cut and mangled their bodies in the most inhuman manner;

July 9 but, that same night, God was pleased to make known the glory of His servants to some of their friends at Gorcum, who were so far from suspecting what was going on at Bril, that they even entertained well-grounded hopes of the liberation of the prisoners. A pious citizen of Gorcum, by name Matthias Thoran, was in the habit of rising every night to pray for the welfare of the State. As he was practising his customary devotions at about four o'clock in the morning of the 9th of July, he beheld this blessed troop of martyrs, clad in white garments, with golden crowns upon their heads, and resplendent with glory. When day was come, he told his fellow-citizens the vision which had been granted him. A similar favour was vouchsafed on the same night to another inhabitant of Gorcum ; so that the death of the martyrs was publicly known and spoken of amongst the Catholics of that town long before the arrival of the messenger who brought the tidings from Bril. A beautiful shrub sprang up on the scene of their martyrdom, bearing nineteen fair white blossoms. Many miracles have been granted through the intercession of the Martyrs of Gorcum and the application of their relics, specially in cases of hernia, a malady from which some of them had suffered when on earth. They were beatified by Clement X., A.D. 1674, and solemnly canonized by Pius IX. on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, A.D. 1867, in the presence of upwards of three hundred Bishops, assembled in the Eternal City to celebrate the eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of the Princes of the Apostles.

Prayer

O God, who didst crown with the wreath of immortality the strife of Thy blessed Martyrs, John and his companions, for the faith, mercifully grant that, fighting here on earth, we may likewise deserve, through

their merits and after their example, to be crowned July 9
with them in heaven. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

JULY 11

**Blessed Ignatius Delgado and Dominic Henares,
Bishops, and their Companions, Martyrs**

(A. D. 1838, 1839, 1840)

OF the glorious band of seventy-seven martyrs beati- July 11
fied by Pope Leo XIII. on May 27, in the holy year
of Jubilee, 1900, twenty-six are assigned in the
Apostolic Brief to the Order of Preachers, nineteen
by actual profession, and the remaining seven by
their connection with the Dominican mission of
Eastern Tonquin. They are often spoken of as the
Martyrs of the Annamite Church, the name of Annam
having been formerly applied to a larger extent of
country than at the present day; and they suffered
in the persecution which raged during the years 1838,
1839, and 1840.

The leaders of the heroic company were two
Dominican prelates, Blessed Ignatius Delgado, Bishop
of Melipotamus¹ and Vicar Apostolic of Eastern Ton-
quin, and his coadjutor, Blessed Dominic Henares,
Bishop of Fesseita and Pro-Vicar Apostolic of the

¹ English Catholics will be interested in noting, that, when our own
venerated Cardinal Wiseman was raised to the Episcopate, June 8,
1840, as coadjutor to Bishop Walsh of the Central District, it was
under this same title, "chosen by him, as we learn from a memorandum,
in commemoration of the martyrdom of a Vicar Apostolic of Ton-
quin . . . not," he adds, "that he thought himself worthy of such a
title, but that he might ever enjoy the patronage and example of so
illustrious and good a pastor" ("Life and Times of Cardinal Wise-
man," i. p. 336). As not quite two years had then elapsed from the
date of Blessed Ignatius's martyrdom, Dr. Wiseman was presumably
his immediate successor in the title of Bishop of Melipotamus.

July 11 same district. Both were Spaniards by birth, and both had laboured in Tonquin for nearly half a century, having arrived there in 1790 and been invested with the Episcopal dignity shortly afterwards.

At the outbreak of the persecution in 1838, the two venerable prelates were on the point of concealing themselves in a large cavern which had been arranged as a hiding-place, when they were betrayed into the hands of the soldiers who had been sent in search of them. Blessed Dominic managed on that occasion to escape; but Blessed Ignatius, who was very infirm, was seized and carried away in a cage, which was so small that it was impossible for him to stand upright in it. On approaching the city of Nam-Dinh, where a great concourse of people awaited his arrival, he beheld a crucifix laid across the entrance to be trampled on by all who passed through the gates. Pierced with grief at the sight, he insisted so earnestly on its removal that he was obeyed; but, as soon as his cage had been borne into the city, the sacred image was replaced on the ground, so that the faithful who were following their Bishop in great numbers on his way of sorrows were unable to enter.

Meanwhile Blessed Dominic had also been captured and imprisoned in a cage; and he was now brought, together with his faithful catechist, Blessed Francis Chien or Chieu, to the same city. For a few moments the two holy Bishops and the Blessed Father Joseph Fernandez, Vicar-Provincial of the Order in Tonquin, who had also been seized, were confronted with each other and able to exchange a few words in their native tongue. Blessed Dominic and his catechist were the first to suffer martyrdom, being beheaded June 25, 1838. On the following July 12, Blessed Ignatius died in his cage of hunger and thirst and

exposure to the rays of a burning sun. The inhuman governor caused the sentence of decapitation, which had already been pronounced on the venerable old man, to be executed on his lifeless body. July 11

There suffered also in this same persecution eight native priests of the Order, who appear to have made their noviciate in the Philippine Islands, and eight devout Tertiaries, of whom four were catechists, one was a doctor, another a tailor, and two were peasants. Faithful to their vocation, these holy members of the Third Order whilst in prison converted and baptized a hundred of their fellow-captives. Some of these native martyrs were subjected to the most horrible torments that oriental cruelty could devise; and one of the catechists, the Blessed Thomas Toan, naturally of a weak and irresolute character, when put to the torture, twice renounced the faith, and twice returned to it. After his second apostasy his remorse bordered on despair; but happily for him, there was in the same prison a priest (probably the Blessed Joseph Hien, O.P., afterwards a martyr) who consoled and absolved him. From that moment Blessed Thomas was filled with heroic courage, and at every fresh insult and torment did but repeat: "I have sinned against my God; He has forgiven me; henceforth I must be for ever faithful to Him." He was starved to death in prison, passing to his reward June 27, 1840.

To these we must add three native secular priests belonging to the Vicariate and three soldiers. The soldiers, after having courageously undergone many sufferings for the faith for the space of a whole year, at length miserably consented to trample on the cross. There are some grounds for believing that they were not wholly responsible for the act, which was committed, so it is said, under the in-

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July 11 fluence of a potion which had been administered to them. Be this as it may, the poor men were broken-hearted when they realised what they had done; and, as the governor refused to accept their retraction, two of them made their way to the king at Hué, boldly declared themselves to be Christians, and by his command were sawn asunder on board a ship. The third, who was too ill to travel, sent a written retraction by the hands of his comrades, and by the royal orders was strangled.

Prayer¹

May the glorious examples of Thy Blessed Martyrs, Ignatius, Dominic, and their companions, so strengthen us in Thy service, O Lord, that we may deserve to attain to eternal joys. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 13

Blessed James of Voragine, Bishop and Confessor

(A.D. 1230-1298)

July 13 BLESSED JAMES was born in the little village of Voragine, also called Varazzo, not far from Genoa. He entered the Order of Saint Dominic at the early age of fourteen, and devoted himself to the acquisition alike of learning and of sanctity, making marvellous progress in both. After teaching theology in various places, he was sent to preach throughout Northern Italy. Such was his eloquence and such the purity with which he spoke his mother tongue, that he took

¹ This prayer was said in the Mass at Saint Peter's on the day of their Beatification.

his place at once in the foremost rank of Italian orators. **July 13**
He was the first to translate the Bible into Italian; and he wrote several works, in particular a large and valuable book of sermons, a treatise in praise of our Blessed Lady, to whom he bore a tender devotion, and a collection of Lives of the Saints, known as the "Golden Legend," which became the most popular book of spiritual reading in the Middle Ages. It was translated into various languages, and was perhaps more widely diffused than any other work before the invention of printing.

He became Prior of the Convent of Genoa, and when only thirty-seven was elected Provincial of Lombardy. His appointment to this important post, whilst still so young, created some surprise throughout the Order, but when the Friars became witnesses of his benevolence and charity, and of the blessings which his wise and saintly administration drew down upon the Houses committed to his charge, this feeling of surprise was exchanged for one of admiration and gratitude, and he continued to hold the office for the then unprecedented period of nineteen years. In the year 1288, Pope Honorius IV. entrusted to him the delicate task of absolving the city of Genoa, in his name, from the censures and the interdict which it had incurred. Blessed James discharged this mission with such prudence and tact as to win all hearts, and not long afterwards the Cathedral Chapter unanimously elected him as Archbishop.

Genoa was at this time in a very distracted state, torn by the rival factions of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, the scene of horrible murders and civil war. The saintly Archbishop succeeded in re-establishing peace and order. He showed himself to be truly the father of his people, sparing no labour on their behalf, and stripping himself of everything in his boundless

July 13 liberality to the poor. He also bestowed munificent benefactions on the hospitals, convents, and churches of his diocese. The Crusaders had brought back with them, after the capture of Constantinople in 1203, a great quantity of holy relics. A portion of those which had fallen to the share of Venice passed into the possession of the Genoese, together with a considerable piece of the True Cross. The pious Archbishop succeeded in obtaining them, and deposited them in the Dominican Church in Genoa, under two tables which he plated with silver.

All through his life, Blessed James had made it his study to acquire interior peace, and his soul had become, according to the testimony of his contemporaries, a perfect mirror of the happiness of heaven. After eight years spent in governing his flock with such wisdom and success that most of the Bishops of Northern Italy took him for their counsellor and model, and adopted his statutes for the reformation of their clergy, the saintly Archbishop of Genoa gently fell asleep in the Lord in the July of the year 1298. His body was laid under the high altar of the Church of Saint Dominic in Genoa, where it received the veneration of the faithful until A.D. 1798, when it was translated to the Church of the Friars Preachers at Santa Maria di Castello. A fresh and very solemn translation took place in the year 1885.

Blessed James was beatified by Pius VII., A.D. 1816.

Prayer

O God, who didst make Blessed James, Thy Confessor and Bishop, a glorious preacher of the Truth and a peacemaker, grant unto us, through his intercession, that we likewise may love peace and truth, and come at length to Thee, in whom is perfect peace and purest truth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 18

Blessed Ceslas, Confessor

(A.D. 1184-1242)

BLESSED CESLAS, the near kinsman and probably the **July 18** brother of another great glory of our Order, St. Hyacinth, belonged to the noble Polish family of the Odrowatz, and was born in the castle of his ancestors, not far from Breslau, in Silesia. His baptismal name, which signifies in his native tongue honour and glory, was a presage of his future greatness, and he early gave signs of the holiness which he was afterwards to attain. The frankness and amiability of his character and the spotless purity of his life gave him a singular influence for good over his companions. The early education of Ceslas and Hyacinth was carried on under the superintendence of their uncle, Yvo Odrowatz, who afterwards became Bishop of Cracow; and so distinguished were the two young saints for piety and diligence that people used to call them "the two sages." Later on, Ceslas was sent to Italy to complete his studies and take his degree in theology and jurisprudence, which he did with much success. On his return to Poland, he embraced the ecclesiastical state, as his brother had already done, and was soon made Canon of the Cathedral of Cracow and raised to other posts of dignity and trust. He employed his ample revenues in relieving the poor and his influence in redressing grievances and in supporting the cause of the weak and the oppressed.

In the year 1220, Bishop Yvo set out on a journey to Rome, taking with him in his retinue his two saintly nephews, and also Henry of Moravia and Herman the

July 18 Teutonic. Shortly after their arrival in the Eternal City, they witnessed one of Saint Dominic's most striking miracles, the raising to life of the young Napoleon. Struck with admiration at the prodigy, Bishop Yvo conceived the desire of taking back with him to Poland some of the sons of the great Patriarch in order to establish the Order in his diocese. The Saint just at that time had, according to his custom, dispersed his children in all directions; moreover, none of them were acquainted with the Polish language, and he was, therefore, not in a position to meet the prelate's wishes. Yvo pressed his request still more warmly, insisting that he must have some Friars Preachers to labour for the salvation of his flock. Then Saint Dominic, yielding to a sudden inspiration, exclaimed: "My Lord, you have with you four young clerics; give them to me. I will clothe them with our habit, form them to apostolic virtues, and return them to you in a short time full of zeal and devotedness." The four chosen souls joyfully accepted the will of God as manifested to them by the voice of Saint Dominic, received the habit from his hands, and soon became models of every religious virtue. At the end of six months their training was complete; they were admitted to profession and sent to preach the Word of God and establish the Order in the countries of the North. After assisting in the foundation of the Convents of Frisach and Cracow, which were soon filled with numerous and fervent Communities, Blessed Ceslas was sent to plant the Order in Bohemia. He received from the king a site for the Convent at Prague, and the Community there soon reckoned as many as a hundred and twenty-six members. He also founded in Bohemia a Monastery for nuns of the Order, and then set out for Silesia, where he established the Convent of Breslau, which henceforth became his

headquarters, and whence he undertook apostolic journeys to evangelise the inhabitants of Central Europe and the southern shores of the Baltic. It was in the course of these journeys that he became acquainted with Saint Hedwiges, Duchess of Poland and Silesia, who placed herself under his spiritual guidance. July 18

Blessed Ceslas was pre-eminently a man of prayer ; he devoted to this holy exercise many hours of the day and prolonged his vigils far into the night ; he led a most penitential life, afflicting his body by continual fasts, disciplines, and other austerities, and taking his scanty rest on the bare ground, with a stone or a log of wood for his pillow. God was pleased to confirm his preaching by the gift of miracles. Coming once to the banks of the Oder, he found the river so swollen and stormy that the ferrymen absolutely refused to carry him across. Like his brother Saint Hyacinth under similar circumstances, Blessed Ceslas betook himself to prayer ; then he stretched his mantle on the raging waters, and, making the sign of the cross, embarked upon it, and in a few minutes safely reached the opposite bank, his clothes, and even his mantle, remaining perfectly dry. He cured great numbers who were sick of various diseases and raised four dead persons to life. The most remarkable of these miracles was that which he worked on a boy, the only son of his mother, whom he raised from the dead after he had been eight days drowned.

When the savage Tartars besieged Breslau about A.D. 1241, the terrified inhabitants took refuge in the fortress, and Blessed Ceslas and his Community fasted and prayed incessantly, in the hope of averting the anger of God from the city. One day when the enemy was attacking the walls, the servant of God came upon the ramparts, crucifix in hand, exhorting the besieged

July 18 to put their trust in God. Suddenly he was seen to be encompassed with light, and over his head appeared an immense globe of fire, whence issued burning darts which fell upon the enemy, killing some and blinding others. The panic-struck Tartars threw down their arms and fled in wild confusion; some of them were converted by the prodigy and received baptism together with their prince.

A few months after this miraculous event, Blessed Ceslas was seized with his last illness. After making a touching exhortation to his Brethren, in which he reminded them that all monastic observances are of no value unless based on humility and self-renunciation, he clasped his crucifix and fervently exclaimed: "Lord, Thou hast been the sole object of my desires; deign in return to admit me to Thy Divine embraces." The glorious Mother of God, whom he had tenderly loved, solaced him in his last moments and conducted him to the joys of heaven on the 16th of July, A.D. 1242.

That same night he appeared, in company with the holy Apostles, to a Dominican nun, and told her, that, in reward of his labours in preaching the gospel, he had been numbered in their ranks. Many prodigies were worked at his tomb, whence issued a miraculous dust which healed many diseases, specially headaches and fevers. Blessed Ceslas was beatified by Clement XI.

Prayer

O God, who didst endow the Blessed Ceslas with virginal purity of manners and a burning zeal for the salvation of souls, and didst render him wonderful to the people of divers nations for his holy actions and the grace of propagating the faith; grant, we beseech Thee, at his intercession, that we may be ever stead-

fast in the faith, and be enabled, through the gift of Thy mercy, to come at length to Thee, who alone art the author and giver of eternal salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 22

Saint Mary Magdalen, Protectress of the Dominican Order

THE holy penitent, Saint Mary Magdalen, whose praise is in the Gospel, has ever been regarded as the particular protectress of the children of Saint Dominic, and especially of his Third Order. Our Lord Himself assigned her as mistress and patroness to Saint Catharine of Siena. It is said to have been she who, together with Saint Catharine of Alexandria, accompanied Our Blessed Lady when she brought the miraculous picture of our Holy Father to Suriano. Innumerable passages in the lives of our Saints testify to the love and devotion they bore her.

Tradition tells us that, in the persecution which arose in Jerusalem after the death of Saint Stephen. Saint Mary Magdalen, together with her brother, Saint Lazarus, her sister, Saint Martha, Saint Maximin, who is said to have been one of the seventy-two disciples, and others, were placed by the Jews on a vessel without oars or sails and entirely destitute of provisions, and thus seemed doomed to certain destruction. But God's angels were watching over the little craft and guided it safely to the shores of Provence. The holy company landed at Marseilles, of which city Saint Lazarus became the first Bishop. Saint Martha founded a community of holy women at Tarrascon; and Saint Mary Magdalen and Saint Maximin pro-

July 22 ceeded to Aix, where the latter fixed his episcopal See. Together they evangelised Provence, preparing themselves for each instruction by prayer and fasting, and confirming their testimony by miracles. But the holy penitent sighed after a life of solitude, that she might sit continually in spirit at those Divine feet which she had washed with her tears and anointed with the spikenard of great price. Our Lord was well content to grant her that "better part," which He had promised should "not be taken from her." He is said to have sent His angels to conduct her to a wild and solitary cave on a mountain-side not far from the shores of the Mediterranean, and now known by the name of "La Sainte-Baume." Here the Saint spent well-nigh three-and-thirty years in the exercises of penance and contemplation, her life being miraculously sustained without the aid of ordinary food. Saint Vincent Ferrer records the tradition that every day, at each of the seven hours of prayer, the angels raised her in the air to listen to heavenly music and to participate in the Divine Banquet.

At length our Lord appeared to her and sweetly invited her, in return for the hospitality she had shown Him in His mortal life, to enter into the heavenly mansions. She was miraculously conveyed to the oratory of Saint Maximin, where the holy Bishop once more refreshed her spirit with the Bread of Angels; and immediately after receiving it, she gave up her soul to the Master whom she had loved so devotedly. Her holy remains were laid to rest in an alabaster tomb, in memory of that alabaster vase which twice served to guard the perfume with which she anointed the Lord. This tomb was in the crypt in which Saint Maximin himself was afterwards buried, and the place bears his name to this day.

When, at the beginning of the eighth century, the Sara-

cens began their ravages in Provence, which continued **July 22** some three hundred years, the Cassianite monks, who had charge of the sacred relics, carefully concealed the crypt beneath a mound of earth, and it was not discovered until A.D. 1279. According to a Dominican tradition, in that year the Prince of Salerno, who was a nephew of Saint Louis of France, and afterwards became Charles II., King of Sicily and Count of Provence, was taken prisoner by the king of Aragon and closely confined in the fortress of Barcelona. By the advice of his confessor, who was a Friar Preacher, he commended himself earnestly to Saint Mary Magdalen, the patron Saint of Provence. That night, which was the eve of her feast, the Prince was suddenly awakened from sleep and found the Saint standing beside him. She bade him rise and follow her, together with his suite. She led them safely out of the fortress, and, after they had walked for some little time in silence, she turned and asked them if they knew where they were. They replied that they believed themselves to be close to the walls of Barcelona. "Not so," answered the Saint; "you are already six miles beyond the Spanish frontier, and only one league from Narbonne." Charles threw himself at her feet, saying, "What can I do in gratitude for this night's deliverance?" Then she bade him search for her relics, telling him that he would find them in the Church of Saint Maximin. "You will know my body," she said, "by this token; the forehead is still preserved with the flesh and skin entire on that part which touched our Lord's risen body. You will also find two vessels, one full of the hair with which I wiped His sacred feet, and another with the blood-stained earth I gathered at the foot of the Cross. I desire that these precious relics be now given to the care of my Brethren, the Friars Preachers, who are indeed my brethren, because, like them, I was a

July 22 preacher and an apostle." With these words she disappeared ; and when day dawned, the prince found that he was indeed close to Narbonne.

He lost no time in repairing to Saint Maximin, where he discovered the sacred relics in a box, bearing an inscription to the effect that they had been removed thither in the year 710, for fear of the sacrileges of the Saracens. Charles then founded a Convent of the Order on the spot and entrusted the precious treasures to the keeping of the Friars. Not content with this testimony of his gratitude to his heavenly deliverer, the prince, when he succeeded to his hereditary dominions, founded no less than twelve Convents of the Order, and in all of them it was ordained that a daily commemoration should be made of Saint Mary Magdalen in the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin.

The Friars Preachers continued to be the faithful guardians of the relics at Saint Maximin and of the sanctuary erected at La Sainte-Baume down to the time of the French Revolution. After the restoration of the French Province of the Order by the celebrated Father Lacordaire, the care of these holy places was once more entrusted to the sons of Saint Dominic, A.D. 1859. Even in our own day they are much-frequented places of pilgrimage.

Prayer

Grant to us, O most clement Father, that, as the Blessed Mary Magdalen, loving our Lord Jesus Christ above all things, obtained the pardon of her sins, so she may obtain for us from Thy mercy eternal happiness. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 23

Blessed Jane of Orvieto, Virgin

(A. D. 1264-1306)

BLESSED JANE, popularly called Vanna, belonged to July 23 the peasant class, and was born at Carnajola, near Orvieto, in Italy, A.D. 1264. She was left an orphan at the age of five, and some of her playfellows told her that, now she had neither father nor mother, there was no one to care for her. Little Jane immediately led them to the church, and pointing to a picture of the Guardian Angel, said, "Behold him who will hold the place of father and mother to me. I have a better parent than you." Divine Providence came to the assistance of the little orphan, and she was adopted by some members of her family who lived at Orvieto. These people were anxious that she should enter the married state as soon as her age would permit, but Jane's heart had been consecrated from childhood to a Heavenly Spouse. To escape their importunity she fled to the house of a friend who lived in the country, and entered the Third Order of Saint Dominic.

In the school of the Divine Master she was taught the virtues of the religious life, detachment from earthly things, patience, obedience, humility, a tender charity for the poor and the sick ; above all, an ardent love of God. So brightly did this heavenly flame burn within her, that, during her long devotions, which occupied great part of the day, she could bear only the lightest clothing, and the bare mention of the love of Jesus, of the maternal goodness of Mary, or of the sufferings of a martyr, sufficed to throw her into an ecstasy. Every Good Friday but one, during the last

July 23 nine years of her life, she was favoured with an extraordinary rapture, lasting from mid-day until evening, during which her body lay stiff and motionless in the attitude of the crucifix, and her bones were distinctly heard to crack, as though being violently dislocated.

One Christmas night, as she was grieving that sickness prevented her from assisting at Midnight Mass and receiving the Divine Infant in Holy Communion, her little chamber was miraculously flooded with light, in the midst of which appeared a white Host, which descended into her breast. On another occasion, when she was again confined to her bed by illness, our Blessed Lady appeared to her, bearing the Divine Infant in her arms. "Jane," said the Holy Child, "thou canst not to-day receive Me in Holy Communion, but I am ever thine by grace."

Blessed Jane strove to conceal from the knowledge of all the Divine favours which were lavished upon her; she sincerely regarded herself as the worst of sinners, and nothing caused her so much pain as to see herself treated with respect and veneration. On the other hand, she looked upon those who ill-treated her as her benefactors. One day, when a woman had grossly insulted her, she said, "I am sorry that I am so weak as to be unable to do a severe penance for this poor woman's sins; at any rate, I shall have the pleasure of saying two hundred *Paters* and *Aves* for her." Hence it passed into a proverb at Orvieto, that, in order to obtain an abundant share in Sister Jane's prayers, one must do her some injury.

She was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and amongst other things predicted some of the miracles which she was to work after her death. She had to endure cruel persecution from the devils, who were sometimes suffered to beat and otherwise ill-treat her; but she bore all with the utmost courage and patience.

Towards the close of her life, Blessed Jane had the happiness of having for her spiritual director Blessed James of Bevagna, who was at that time exercising the office of Lector and Preacher in the Convent at Orvieto. At the beginning of the August of 1301, this holy man had occasion to visit the Convent he had founded at Bevagna, and there he was attacked by his last illness and happily departed to our Lord. On the morning of his death, Blessed Jane, who did not even know that he was ill, was praying in the Church of the Friars at Orvieto, when she saw her holy confessor coming towards her. She was greatly rejoiced at the sight, and begged him to hear her confession, which he accordingly did. He then gave her his belt and his knife, to keep in remembrance of him. In the course of the afternoon, Blessed Jane sent a small present to the Convent by a servant, who brought back word that Father James was dying at Bevagna. "Impossible!" said the servant of God, "I saw him in church this morning;" and she produced the things which he had given her and which the Fathers perfectly recognised as having been those used by her saintly director. They then despatched messengers to Bevagna, who found that Blessed James had indeed died that morning, and that his body was lying exposed in the church.

Blessed Jane prepared for her own last passage with the greatest fervour, and, fortified by the holy Sacraments of the Church, departed to her Spouse on the 23rd of July, A.D. 1306. Many visions and miracles bore witness to the glory which she had attained in heaven. Fifteen months after her death, when her body was removed to a more fitting resting-place, it was found perfectly flexible and incorrupt. She was beatified by Benedict XIV.

July 23

Prayer

July 23 O God, who didst reward by an increase of heavenly gifts the singular purity and fervent love of Blessed Jane, Thy Virgin, grant that we may so imitate her virtues as to be ever pleasing to Thee, by the chastity of our lives and the purity of all our affections. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 27**Blessed Augustine of Bugella, Confessor**

(A.D. 1493)

July 27 BLESSED AUGUSTINE FANGI was born of noble parents at Bugella, also called Biella, in Piedmont, in the first half of the fifteenth century, and received the Dominican habit at an early age in the convent of his native place. He led a life of extreme innocence and rigorous penance, and was gifted with an heroic patience, of which he gave proof under a terrible illness with which he was visited, and in which he was covered with ulcers from head to foot. During the long and cruel surgical operations to which he was subjected, he remained absorbed in prayer, uniting his sufferings with those of his Divine Master, and not even uttering a groan. His prayer was continual, and in it he was often seen raised from the ground in extasy. He had the gift of tears, which flowed abundantly from his eyes, especially when he was saying Mass or reciting Office in Choir. His miracles were very numerous, especially in casting out devils. He raised to life an infant who had died without baptism; and on one occasion, seeing a boy weeping inconsolably for having broken a vessel full of wine,

he was touched with compassion, made the sign of the Cross over the fragments, and restored the vessel to him, whole and full of wine as before. He governed many Convents with much charity and prudence, restoring regular discipline where it had become relaxed, and giving a fresh impulse to fervent Communities. The success of his preaching and his many miracles drew upon him what is ever the most painful portion of the Saints—the esteem and admiration of men. To escape these distasteful honours, he begged to be removed to some Convent where he was unknown, and was accordingly sent to Venice, in which city he passed the last ten years of his life. His renown followed him, and was transformed after his death into religious veneration.

Blessed Augustine joyfully prepared for his passage to eternity by a devout reception of the Sacraments and by making acts of fervent love. At length, raising himself upon his knees and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he cried out with a loud voice: "Praise be to God! praise be to the Most High!" and, with these words on his lips, he expired on the 22nd of July, A.D. 1493. He was buried in a corner of the Lady Chapel, which had been specially dear to him and where he had almost daily celebrated Mass, calling it "St. Mary's of Paradise." Many miracles were worked at his tomb. When it was opened, four years after his death, the coffin was found literally swimming in water, but the body of the holy man and his garments were as fresh and entire as though he had only been buried that morning.

During the troublous times which ushered in the nineteenth century, the Church of Saint Dominic at Venice was doomed to destruction to make room for public gardens; and the relics of Blessed Augustine now repose in the Church of Saint Thomas the Apostle,

O

July 27 which is served by the Franciscan Fathers. He was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord Jesus, through the merits and imitation of Blessed Augustine Thy Confessor, so to quench the desires of the flesh by penance as ever to grow in Thy grace and in the knowledge of Thee. Who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

JULY 28

Blessed Anthony della Chiesa, Confessor

(A.D. 1395-1459)

July 28 BLESSED ANTHONY belonged to the noble family della Chiesa di Roddi, and was born at San Germano in Piedmont, A.D. 1395. From his childhood, his heart was set on heavenly things; but, in deference to the wishes of the Marquis his father, he delayed his entrance into religion until he had attained the age of twenty-two. He then solicited and obtained admission into the Convent of the Friars Preachers at Vercelli, where he soon became distinguished alike for learning and sanctity. When he had been raised to the priesthood, he devoted himself with indefatigable zeal to the sacred functions of preaching, hearing confessions, and directing souls in the path of perfection, and for many years was the companion of Saint Bernardine of Siena in his apostolic labours. He had a special gift for consoling the afflicted and for converting obstinate sinners. The town of Como was completely changed by his apostolic labours, the inhabitants abandoning their

vicious courses and adopting a well-ordered and Christian manner of life. July 28

The humility of Blessed Anthony caused him to hold in abhorrence the esteem of men and all honours and dignities. He was nevertheless several times compelled to accept the charge of Prior in various important Convents of the Order—namely, those of Como, Savona, Florence, and Bologna. Into all these Convents he introduced wise reforms, causing the Rule to be faithfully observed in every particular and earning for himself the reputation of a prudent and just Superior. His countenance was always serene; he received his brethren with kindness, and knew how to compassionate human weakness without ceasing to employ the rod of correction when circumstances required it. When his terms of office were ended, he would raise his hands to heaven and joyfully give thanks to God for his release; when re-elected Superior, he was filled with sorrow, and would say with a sigh: "Is it possible that I should be placed at the helm when I am not even fit to manage an oar?"

Blessed Anthony had an ardent devotion to our Blessed Lady, from whom he received many signal favours. On one occasion amongst others, when, rapt in ecstasy, he was conversing familiarly with the Queen of Heaven, his room was seen flooded with light and his own countenance radiant with celestial splendour. Another time, when he was going by sea with a companion from Savona to Genoa, the ship in which he sailed was captured by pirates during the night. The two religious, who had no prospect before them but that of a hard captivity or a cruel death, commended themselves to God and Our Lady; and, when morning dawned, the pirates, struck by the saintly appearance of their prisoners, set them on shore without demanding any ransom.

July 28 Grave authors have recorded the following extraordinary story in connection with this holy man. One night when he had remained in the church after Matins, according to his custom, to pray, he heard the tramp of horses passing the building. Yielding to a sudden inspiration, he unlocked the doors and beheld a multitude of horsemen. He asked them who they were and whither they were going. Receiving no answer and thinking they might be foreigners, he repeated his question in Latin, but still without result. The holy man then began to suspect the truth and cried in a loud voice: "In the name of Jesus Christ, Master of heaven and earth, I command you to tell me who you are and whither you are going." Then one of the leaders of the party replied that they were demons and were going to fetch a certain rich usurer who lived in a palace hard by, and who was at the point of death. Touched with compassion for the unhappy sinner, the servant of God exclaimed: "I shall pray so earnestly that, if there be yet time, this man shall not belong to you." "Pray as thou wilt," replied the demons; "thy prayers will be of no avail; his sentence is pronounced." "At least," said the servant of God, "pass this way on your return, that I may know the result." The infernal horsemen pledged themselves to do so, and Blessed Anthony began to pray with tears for the dying man. In a quarter of an hour he again heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and beheld the same terrible procession, this time bearing with them their unhappy victim, bound hand and foot, on a hideous black horse. When day dawned, two well-dressed persons presented themselves at the Convent, begging Father Anthony to come and console a family whose father had died during the night. On reaching the house, he was requested to allow the interment to take place in his church and to pronounce

the customary funeral oration. He consented to do so, **July 28** on condition of being first allowed to see the corpse. This request was refused on various pretexts, and finally he was told that the coffin was closed. "You could easily open it again," said the man of God; "but I know very well why you refuse to grant my request. This very night a legion of devils came and carried off your unhappy father, body and soul, to hell. Beware of imitating his conduct. Restore your ill-gotten goods and give alms to secure the salvation of your souls." On returning to his Convent, he related to the Friars the horrible scene which he had witnessed, in order to incite them to preach against usury.

Blessed Anthony died at Como, on the day which he had himself predicted, A.D. 1459. Many miraculous favours have been granted through his intercession, and he was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, who didst set Blessed Anthony, Thy Confessor, on fire with Divine love, enkindle, we beseech Thee, through his intercession, the fire of Thy charity in our hearts, that, loving Thee on earth, we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

JULY 30

Blessed Mannes, Confessor

(About A.D. 1155-1235)

BLESSED MANNES was the second son of Don **July 30** Felix Guzman and Blessed Jane of Aza, and elder brother of Saint Dominic, and was born in Spain, probably about the middle of the twelfth century.

July 30 That he was considerably older than Saint Dominic, who was born in A.D. 1170, is proved by the fact that he and his eldest brother had already made choice of the ecclesiastical state before the birth of the Founder of the Friars Preachers. Of the early life of Blessed Mannes we know little or nothing, save that he was much given to prayer and contemplation. When Saint Dominic began to evangelise Languedoc, Blessed Mannes came to share his labours, and was one of the sixteen first companions of the Saint who made their profession in his hands at Prouille, on the Feast of the Assumption, A.D. 1217. He was immediately despatched to found the Order in Paris, and arrived in that city in company with Father Michael de Fabra and a lay brother, on September 12th of the same year.

God had bestowed on him a marvellous power of attracting souls; the peace, gentleness, and serenity of his character exercised an irresistible influence on all who approached him. We next hear of him as discharging for a time the office of chaplain to the nuns at Prouille, after which he was entrusted with the care of the newly established Convent of Dominicans at Madrid, a post for which his contemplative spirit and his intimate knowledge of the ways of perfection eminently fitted him. Blessed Mannes probably filled this office for about twelve years. The last notice we find of him regards the establishment of a chapel in honour of Saint Dominic at Calaroga, the scene of his birth. On hearing of his brother's canonization in the year 1233, Blessed Mannes visited their ancestral home, and exhorted the people to build a chapel in honour of him who was truly the glory of their village. "Content yourselves for the present with a modest oratory," said he; "my brother, when he chooses, will know how to enlarge it." About

thirty years later, this prophecy was verified, when **July 30** King Alphonsus X. laid on this hallowed ground the foundations of a magnificent church and of a Convent of nuns of the Order.

The date of Blessed Mannes' death is unknown. He was laid to rest in the tomb of his ancestors in the Cistercian Church of Gumiel d'Izan, where God was pleased to manifest his glory by many miracles. Later on, his relics were placed under the High Altar, together with those of other Saints. He was beatified by Gregory XVI., having been honoured by the faithful from the time of his holy death.

Prayer

O God, who by Thy wonderful providence didst guide Blessed Mannes, Thy Confessor, into the way of perfection, direct our actions by that same gracious mercy, that we may seek to do what Thou commandest, and so attain to what Thou hast promised. Through our Lord. Amen.

AUGUST 2

Blessed Jane of Aza, Mother of Saint Dominic

(12th Century)

BLESSED JANE OF AZA, though believed by some **Aug. 2** writers to have been a daughter of the ducal house of Brittany, is more generally thought to have belonged to the noble Spanish family of the Garciez, related by blood to Saint Lewis of France, Saint Ferdinand of Spain, and others who have been raised to the altars of the Church. Her birth took place in the first half of the twelfth century, at the Castle of

Aug. 2 Aza, near Aranda, on the Douro. Of her youth we have no particulars ; as soon as she was of an age to marry, she contracted an alliance with Don Felix de Guzman of Calaroga in Old Castile, whose lineage was as noble and as saintly as her own. His personal character, as well as his rank, rendered him in every way worthy to become her husband ; and the household over which they ruled was so remarkable for its piety and good order, that it was commonly said rather to resemble that of a monastery than of a knightly castle.

To singular beauty of person and the charms of a cultivated mind, Blessed Jane added solid piety and great energy in the practice of good works. The world had never had any attractions for her ; she applied herself diligently to the requirements of her state, and devoted all the time which remained after the discharge of her domestic duties to prayer and works of charity. She was ever distinguished for humility, and, high-born lady as she was, the simplicity and modesty of her bearing excelled that of all her attendants. She frequently spent the whole night in devotional exercises, made pilgrimages to the neighbouring sanctuaries, and visited the sick and poor in their humble dwellings.

Of the three sons born of this truly Christian marriage, Antonio, the eldest, became a secular priest, and, enamoured of holy poverty, distributed his patrimony to the poor and retired to a hospital, where he spent the remainder of his days humbly ministering to the sick. Mannes, the second son, also embraced the ecclesiastical state, in due course became one of the first Friar Preachers, and has received the honours of beatification. By the dedication of both their sons to the service of the sanctuary, Don Felix and his wife were left without an heir to carry on the succession of their family, and desiring greatly to obtain from Heaven

the gift of yet another son, Doña Jane resolved to present her petition to God through the intercession of Saint Dominic of Silos, a Saint at that time renowned throughout Spain for the fame of his miracles, especially in the releasing of captives. Aug. 2

The Monastery of Silos, which stands in the near vicinity of Calaroga, was the resort of pilgrims from every part of the country; and there, with the approbation of the Abbot, she began a novena, spending, not her days only, but her nights also in the church, the hard pavement of which was her only bed. On the seventh day of the novena the Saint appeared to her, and declared that her prayers were heard, and that she would become the mother of a son who should be the light of the Church and the terror of heretics. In gratitude, she offered to the Saint the child who was to be given her through his intercession, and promised that, in memory of this favour, he should bear the name of Dominic. Before his birth she beheld her son in a dream or vision, represented under the figure of a black and white dog, holding in its mouth a torch which kindled and illuminated the entire world. About this time also Jane had, with her accustomed liberality, distributed to the poor the entire contents of a cask of excellent wine. Fearing that this might cause some annoyance to her husband, she knelt down in the cellar and offered the following touching prayer:—"O Lord Jesus, though I do not deserve to be heard, I beseech Thee, nevertheless, to take pity upon me in the name of Thy servant, the dear little child whom I bear in my womb and whom I have consecrated to Thee." The prayer was scarcely ended when the cask was found to be miraculously refilled.

Doña Jane would entrust to no one the nurturing of this child of benediction, the future father and founder of the Order of Preachers; she brought him up her-

Aug. 2 self with the utmost care, and, when he was but a few weeks old, she and Don Felix bore him to the Abbey of Silos and offered him to God before the altar of Saint Dominic. The Abbot celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving, and when turning round to say the *Dominus vobiscum*, his eyes chanced to rest upon the infant, and he uttered instead the words, *Ecce reparator Ecclesia*,—"Behold the reformer of the Church." Perceiving his mistake, he endeavoured to correct it, but three times the same words involuntarily escaped his lips, and they were taken as a presage of the child's future destiny.

Blessed Jane also carried the infant to the tomb of his great-uncle, Blessed Peter of Ucles, the founder of the military religious Order of the Knights of Saint James of the Sword. She seems frequently to have visited this spot, where a hermitage still bears her name, whilst a fountain and garden in the neighbourhood are called the fountain and garden of Saint Dominic. When he had reached the age of seven, she entrusted her child to the care of her brother, the arch-priest of the neighbouring town of Gumiel d'Izan; and another of her brothers, the Abbot of La Vid, seems also to have had his share in the education of the young Saint.

Don Felix and Blessed Jane must have had other children besides the three here mentioned, as it is certain that Saint Dominic and Blessed Mannes had two nephews who entered the Order of Preachers; and the name of Guzman has been perpetuated in Spain even to our own days and has been allied by marriage to many of the royal families of Europe.

The death of Blessed Jane is believed to have taken place between the years 1185 and 1194, when her son was studying at Palencia. She was buried in the parish church of Calaroga, but her remains were subsequently translated, first to the family burial-

place of the Guzmans at Gumiel d'Izan, and later on to Peñafiel. From time immemorial she has been held in great veneration, and she was beatified by Leo XII. Aug. 2

Prayer

O God, who didst wonderfully make known to Thy handmaid, Blessed Jane, the grace of the heavenly calling of her son, Dominic, we beseech Thee that, imitating her and her son thus foreshown to her, we may, by the loving intercession of them both, receive everlasting rewards. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AUGUST 4

Our Holy Father, Saint Dominic

(A.D. 1170-1221)

SAINT DOMINIC, the Father and Founder of the Order of Preachers, was born at Calaroga in Old Castile, A.D. 1170, of the illustrious family of the Guzmans. His mother, Blessed Jane of Aza, beheld him in vision before his birth under the figure of a black and white dog, holding in its mouth a torch which set the whole world on fire; and the noble lady who held him at the font saw, as the water was poured on his head, a bright star appear on his forehead, whence, in after years, there shone forth as it were a radiant light, which filled men with respect and love. After a pious education under the care of his maternal uncle, the arch-priest of Gumiel d'Izan, the young Dominic was sent to the University of Palencia, where he specially distinguished himself by his talents, his modesty, and his tender compassion for the poor. In a terrible famine which desolated Spain in the year 1191, he even sold his books and distributed their price to the Aug. 2

Aug. 4 starving multitudes, and on two occasions he offered himself to be sold as a slave in order to deliver others from situations of danger.

He embraced the ecclesiastical state and joined a Community of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, which had been recently founded at Osma, and of which he became the Sub-Prior. In the year 1203 he accompanied his Bishop, Don Diego d'Azevedo, on a political embassy to the north of Europe, on their return from which they visited Rome and asked permission of the Holy Father to go and preach the gospel to the barbarous hordes then pressing on the north-eastern frontiers of Europe. This was refused, but they were permitted instead to labour in the south of France, at that time grievously infested by the Albigenses. The hideously blasphemous doctrines of these heretics were the complete and radical negation of all Christian dogma, and struck at the very root of all social morality, whilst their undisguised contempt of authority made their existence no less dangerous to the State than it was hostile to the Church.

It was whilst he was thus engaged in defending the faith in Languedoc that Our Lady appeared to Saint Dominic and taught him the devotion of the Holy Rosary, by the preaching of which he gained an immense harvest of souls. One of the many miracles which illustrated this period of his life was the saving the lives of forty English pilgrims, whose boat capsized as they were crossing the Garonne on their way to Saint James of Compostella. On another occasion the written document in which he had defended the Catholic faith was miraculously delivered from the flames, whilst that drawn up by the heretics was instantly reduced to ashes.

In the year 1206, Saint Dominic founded at Prouille

his first Convent for religious women, now known as his Second Order, who devote themselves to a life of austerity and contemplation. Gradually, too, he gathered companions around him to assist him in his apostolic labours, and in the year 1215 he again visited Rome to obtain the consent of Pope Innocent III. for the foundation of the Order of Friars Preachers. At first it was refused. In a vision of the night, however, the Pontiff seemed to see the Lateran Basilica about to fall, but supported on the shoulders of Saint Dominic. In consequence of this manifestation of the Divine will he withdrew his opposition, and in the year 1216 his successor, Honorius III., solemnly approved the new Order, and the first sixteen companions of the Saint made their profession on the Festival of the Assumption, pledging themselves to observe the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Constitutions drawn up for them by their holy Founder. These Constitutions combined the monastic observances of earlier ages with theological studies and active labours for the salvation of souls. At a later period, the Saint founded his Third Order, which at first was of the nature of a military religious Order for the defence of the Church, but which has now exchanged the duties of military service for those of penance and charity. Women as well as men are received into its ranks, and some of the sanctity of the cloister has thus passed into family and secular life. Besides Tertiaries living in their own homes, there are now in almost every part of the world numerous flourishing congregations of the Third Order, gathered together in Community under all the obligations of religious life and devoting themselves to every kind of charitable labour.

The remaining five years of the Saint's life were spent in training the disciples who flocked around him, and whom he dispersed to found the Order in every

Aug 4

Aug. 4 part of Europe, and in preaching in many of the towns and villages of France, Spain, and Italy. In Rome he was employed by the Pope to gather together a number of religious women then living in the city without enclosure or any kind of regular discipline. He succeeded in forming them into a fervent Community, which he established at Saint Sixtus. His miracles were very numerous, including the raising of three dead persons to life. God was pleased to grant him many wonderful visions, one of the most remarkable of which was that in which he beheld his children beneath the folds of Our Lady's mantle, and heard from the lips of his Divine Master the consoling words, "I have given thy Order to My Mother."

Saint Dominic is firmly believed to have preserved his baptismal innocence. He was pre-eminently a man of prayer, much given to the practice of penance, burning with zeal for the salvation of souls, unrivalled in humility and gentleness, and gifted with a marvellous serenity of soul, which nothing seemed capable of disturbing.

Shortly after the second General Chapter of his Order, he received an intimation of his approaching death, which took place at Bologna on August 6th, A.D. 1221, at the age of fifty-one. With his dying breath the holy Founder promised his children that he would be more helpful to them in heaven than he had ever been on earth. He was canonized twelve years after his death by Pope Gregory IX., who, as Cardinal, had been his personal friend.

Prayer

O God, who hast vouchsafed to enlighten Thy Church by the merits and teaching of Thy blessed Confessor, our holy Father, Saint Dominic, grant at his interces-

sion that it may never be destitute of temporal help, **Aug. 4**
and may always increase in spiritual growth. Through
Christ our Lord. Amen.

AUGUST 8

**Blessed Augustine of Lucera, Bishop
and Confessor**

(A.D. 1262-1323)

BLESSED AUGUSTINE GAZOTHI or CASSIOTA was **Aug. 8**
born at Trau in Dalmatia, of noble parents, about
A.D. 1262. He entered the Dominican Order at an
early age, and was sent to study at the University of
Paris, where he made extraordinary progress both in
learning and sanctity. On his return to his native
land, he preached with much zeal and fruit of souls,
and rendered important services to the Church. He
founded several Convents of his Order and was held
in great veneration as a wise and holy superior. In
order to draw down the grace of God upon his ministry,
he often spent the whole night in prayer, and he was
accustomed to quote the words of Saint Augustine:
"He knows how to live well who knows how to pray
well," and those of Blessed Jordan of Saxony: "As
the body is supported by mingled food and drink, so
our souls are supported by mingled prayer and study
of Holy Scripture." If any of his subjects appeared
negligent in the observances of religious life, he would
stir him up to better things by those other words
of Saint Augustine: "Since I began to serve God,
as I have hardly ever seen better men than those
who live a holy life in monasteries, so have I never seen
worse than those who live not in them as they should."

Aug. 8 The servant of God was next summoned to Italy, where he exerted himself with wonderful success in reconciling the rival factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines; thence he passed into Bosnia, where his apostolic labours for the defence of the faith and the extirpation of heresy were rewarded by an abundant harvest of souls. His next mission was to Hungary, then torn by internal dissensions; and here he was associated with the Apostolic Legate, Cardinal Nicholas Boccasino, of our Order, who was afterwards raised to the Chair of Saint Peter under the title of Benedict XI., and who has received the honours of beatification. On becoming Pope, this holy man summoned his former colleague to Rome, in order to raise him to the episcopate. When the servant of God presented himself for his first audience, the holy Pontiff was suffering from acute rheumatism, and it was with difficulty that he stretched out his hand to greet him. Scarcely had the lips of Blessed Augustine touched the suffering hand, when all pain disappeared and the Pope found himself completely cured.

Blessed Benedict with his own hands consecrated his friend Bishop, and appointed him to the See of Zagrab, now called Agram, in Slavonia.

On arriving in his diocese, the holy Bishop won the hearts of his people by his ardent charity, his familiar instructions, and his numerous miracles. His clergy stood in great need of reform, but Blessed Augustine by his tact and the influence of his personal sanctity soon effected a salutary change amongst them. His revenues were spent in relieving the poor and in completing the cathedral begun by one of his predecessors. But he would never allow his family arms to be placed on the building or on any of the gifts which he presented to it. He founded a Convent of his Order in his episcopal city, and loved to retire into

it from time to time, in order to refresh his soul by **Aug. 8** prayer and contemplation.

God had granted him to an extraordinary degree the power of healing the sick. His humility became alarmed, and, in order to avoid the praises of men, he planted a lime tree, and, after offering a devout prayer, bade the people henceforth seek their cure from the leaves of that tree. It soon became evident that his prayer had been heard; and even the Turks, when they took possession of the country, respected the health-giving tree, which was popularly called "Saint Augustine's lime tree."

After ruling the See of Agram for fourteen years, he was translated to that of Lucera, also called Nocera, in the south of Italy, at the request of Robert, King of Naples and Sicily, who was anxious to provide for the reformation of morals in that part of his dominions, where the Saracens had until recently had a footing. As soon as Blessed Augustine entered his new diocese, he placed it under the patronage of our Blessed Lady, and decreed that his cathedral city should resume its former name of Santa Maria della Vittoria. By his prayers, labours, and example he succeeded in less than six years in completely banishing from his diocese the superstitions and evil practices introduced by the Saracens, and his half-barbarous flock became a truly Christian people.

His holy and happy death took place on the 3rd of August, A.D. 1323, and he was buried in the Church of Saint Dominic, attached to the Convent which he had built for his Brethren at Nocera. Many miracles were worked at his tomb, and he has been held in the greatest veneration from the time of his death. He was beatified by Clement XI.

Prayer

Aug. 8 O God, who wast pleased to provide for Thy Church in the Blessed Augustine, Thy Confessor and Bishop, an example of the good shepherd, mercifully grant that by his intercession we may be found worthy to be placed in Thy pasture for ever. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AUGUST 9**Blessed John of Salerno, Confessor**

(13th Century)

Aug. 9 BLESSED JOHN of Salerno was a native of Southern Italy, and belonged to the illustrious family of Quarna, which was allied by blood to the Norman princes who long ruled over the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily. Whilst pursuing his studies at Bologna, he became acquainted with our Holy Father, Saint Dominic, who himself received him into the Order. From that time Blessed John made marvellous progress both in learning and sanctity, and became one of the columns of the rising institute. The holy Patriarch regarded him with singular affection, and often took him as the companion of his journeys, and made choice of him to establish the Order in Florence. Twelve Brethren were selected for this important foundation, and Blessed John, though probably the youngest of the party, was appointed their Superior. They took up their abode at first in a small Convent which had been built for them at Ripoli, a few miles outside Florence; but this inconvenient abode was soon exchanged, first for San Pancrazio, adjoining the ramparts, and finally for Santa Maria Novella within the city.

The eloquence and sanctity of the young Prior drew

many illustrious recruits to the Order, and did much to stem the progress of the Manichæan heresy, of which Florence was at that time one of the chief strongholds. He was a perfect model of a religious Superior, a most exact observer of the Rule, gentle, kind, and yet firm in enforcing its observance on others. He spent a great part of the night in prayer, often ravished in extasy; he celebrated Mass with angelic devotion, abundant tears, and minute care in the very least of the sacred ceremonies. He would often impress upon his subjects that, if a religious is bound to aim at perfection in all his actions, there was none which demands of him so much vigilance, piety, and purity as the reception of the Holy Eucharist. God made known to him the secrets of hearts; hence on communicating days he would often warn seculars of hidden faults of which they had been guilty, and his own young religious of failings which had escaped their notice.

Aug. 9

One day, when a possessed woman was being exorcized, the devil exclaimed: "I shall not go out of her save at the command of him who in the midst of the flames was not burnt." He was adjured to explain what he meant; then, with frightful yells and contortions, he named the Prior of the Dominicans. Blessed John was sent for, and immediately freed the woman from her infernal tormentor; and this circumstance revealed a signal victory which he had gained when snares had been laid for his chastity, and which in his humility he had hitherto kept concealed.

The Friars at Florence had the happiness of receiving two visits from Saint Dominic in the years 1219 and 1220. The following year Blessed John was summoned to Bologna to assist at the death-bed of his beloved father.

During the closing years of his life, God favoured the holy Prior with the gift of miracles, and he wrought

Aug 9 many remarkable cures. He established a convent of religious women of the Order at Ripoli, where the Friars had first been stationed, and worked to his dying day for the good of the Church, the extirpation of heresy, and the propagation of the Order. At length, having for many years governed the Convent of Santa Maria Novella, worn out by his labours and austerities, he happily departed to our Lord, exhorting his Brethren with his dying breath to keep their vows faithfully, to love God with their whole heart, and to despise all perishable things. His tomb became a place of pilgrimage and was honoured by many miracles. It was customary to keep a lamp burning in the chapel where the holy relics reposed. One day the oil failed, and the Sacristan, seeing a poor woman kneeling in prayer before the shrine, begged an alms of her to renew the supply. She assured him she had not a drop of oil nor the means of procuring any. "Go home," said the Brother; "I am quite sure that, through the merits of the servant of God, you will find some in your house." The poor woman went home and was surprised to find the little vessel in which she kept her supply of oil full to the brim. She immediately returned to the church and related the miracle in the presence of witnesses.

Blessed John of Salerno was beatified by Pius VI.

Prayer

O God, who for the increase of the faith didst make Blessed John, Thy Confessor, a noble preacher of Thy Word, grant to us, through his intercession, that what we believe with the heart unto justice we may confess with the mouth unto salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AUGUST 16

Saint Hyacinth, Confessor

(A.D. 1185-1257)

THIS great glory of the Dominican Order belonged Aug. 16 to the noble Polish family of Odrowatz, whence at a later date sprang the house of Kostka, which gave birth to Saint Stanislas, the novice Saint of the Society of Jesus. Saint Hyacinth was born in the neighbourhood of Breslau, in Silesia, in A.D. 1185. He was nearly related to Blessed Ceslas, probably his younger brother, and from infancy gave promise of unusual talent and virtue, and of extraordinary gifts both of nature and grace, specially of a tender love and compassion for the poor. As a child, he would gaze at the portraits of his forefathers which hung in the halls of his ancestral home, and ask to be told the story of their exploits; and, when he grew older, he would often encourage himself to higher things by the remembrance of their example. The early education of the two holy brothers was superintended by their uncle, Yvo Odrowatz, afterwards Bishop of Cracow, who was so struck by the precocious sanctity of Hyacinth as to predict that he would one day be raised to the altars of the Church. Both embraced the ecclesiastical state and accompanied their uncle on a visit to Rome, where, as has been already related in the life of Blessed Ceslas, they were present when Saint Dominic raised the young Napoleon to life, and subsequently received the habit of the Order from the hands of the Holy Patriarch in the chapter-room of Santa Sabina.

Saint Hyacinth, during his short period of probation,

Aug. 16 learnt faithfully to copy the life of our holy Father, especially his spirit of prayer and penance and his zeal for the salvation of souls. Their noviciate over, he and his companions set out for Poland, preaching and founding convents as they went along. Their route lay through Northern Italy, Styria, Austria, Moravia, and Silesia. On arriving at Cracow, they gathered around them a fervent band of novices and established a large convent. Faithful to the Dominican law of dispersion, Saint Hyacinth soon despatched Blessed Ceslas and Henry of Moravia to plant the Order in Bohemia, whilst he himself set out to evangelize Prussia, Denmark, Scandinavia, and Russia. He realised Saint Dominic's desire of preaching to the Cumans, amongst whom he found his Brethren already labouring, and then continued his apostolic journeys through Turkestan, Tartary, and Thibet, as far as the great wall of China. Modern missionaries have found traces of his labours in these countries. Saint Hyacinth also preached along the shores of the Black Sea and in the islands of the Grecian Archipelago.

He ever bore a tender devotion to the holy Mother of God, and she in her turn showered down countless favours upon him. She once appeared to him on the Feast of her Assumption, and gave him this consoling promise: "Hyacinth, my son, rejoice; for thy prayers are pleasing to my Son, the Saviour of the world; and whatsoever thou shalt ask of Him in my name thou shalt obtain through my intercession." From that day the Saint's confidence was so increased, that he was not afraid to ask even for things which were, naturally speaking, impossible of accomplishment; and his life became a series of miracles, such as it has been granted to few Saints to work since the days of the Apostles.

One day when the Saint was beginning his Mass in the Convent at Kiev, the Tartars suddenly broke into

the city, and he and his Community were compelled to take to flight. Still clad in his sacred vestments, Saint Hyacinth took the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle and prepared to depart. But when he had got half-way down the church, he heard a voice proceeding from a huge alabaster statue of our Blessed Lady, saying: "Hyacinth, my son, wilt thou leave me behind to be trampled under foot by the Tartars? Take me with thee." "How can I, holy Virgin?" replied the Saint; "thy image is too heavy." "Take me, nevertheless," answered our Lady; "my Son will lighten the burden." Then the Saint clasped the massive image in one arm, and, bearing the Blessed Sacrament in the other, went forth courageously, and crossed the Dnieper dry-shod, whilst his Brethren who followed him, stretched their mantles on the water and embarking upon them, also traversed the river in safety. The miraculous image is still preserved at Lemberg.

When the term of Saint Hyacinth's earthly pilgrimage was drawing to a close, as he was one day saying Mass, he suddenly beheld a dazzling light descend from heaven, in the midst of which appeared a long procession of angels and virgins, forming an escort to their Queen. The celestial company prostrated round the altar whilst the Saint offered the Holy Sacrifice. At its conclusion he saw Our Lady crowned by her Divine Son with a crown of flowers and of stars, which Mary then took from her head and showed to him, saying: "Behold! this crown is for thee."

He was taken ill on the following feast of Saint Dominic. On the eve of the Assumption he made a touching address to his Brethren, after which he rose to assist at the Matins and Mass of the festival. Then, kneeling on the altar steps, supported by his weeping children, he received the Holy Viaticum and Extreme

Aug. 16

Aug. 16 **Uction.** They carried him back to his cell, where he calmly awaited his release. When the end was close at hand, he intoned the 30th Psalm: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped," and breathed forth his holy soul to God at the verse: "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." It was the 15th of August, A.D. 1257. After his death he appeared in glory to the Bishop of Cracow, in company with the Martyr Bishop, Saint Stanislas. He was also seen by a holy nun who lived near Cracow, being led by Our Lady into heaven amidst a glorious company of angels and of saints.

Almost innumerable miracles were worked at his tomb, including the raising of as many as fifty persons from the dead. He was canonized A.D. 1594 by Clement VIII., and Urban VIII. extended the celebration of his festival to the universal Church.

Prayer

O God, who didst make Blessed Hyacinth, Thy Confessor, glorious amongst the people of divers nations for the holiness of his life and the glory of his miracles, grant that by his example we may amend our lives, and be defended by his help in all adversities. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AUGUST 17

Blessed Emily Bicchieri, Virgin

(A.D. 1238-1314)

Aug. 17 **EMILY BICCHIERI** was born of pious and noble parents at Vercelli, in Italy, on the 3rd of May, A.D. 1238. Having lost her mother at an early age, she cast herself at the feet of Our Lady's statue and besought the holy Mother of God to take her

under her special protection. At the age of sixteen Aug. 17 she made known to her father her ardent desire of embracing the religious life in the Third Order of Saint Dominic. He built and endowed for her a large Monastery outside the city, dedicated to Saint Margaret. Thither she retired in company with some other maidens of noble birth, and at the age of twenty became Prioress of the new Community, which she governed with great prudence and charity, using her most earnest endeavours to maintain regular observance and to cause her subjects to advance in the path of perfection. The point on which she chiefly insisted was purity of intention. She was never weary of exhorting them to be assiduous in the contemplation of the Divine mysteries, and she was accustomed to say that a nun who is not thoroughly exercised in this kind of prayer is like a stranger going to a city in order to make purchases, and not knowing with whom to deal or at what price to buy. She taught them the lesson of humility by her example even more than by her words; for, though she was Foundress and Prioress of the house, she always took her turn in discharging the lowliest offices.

Blessed Emily was wont to train her children to practise little acts of mortification, and to place them in the hands of their Guardian Angel till they should stand in need of them to cancel their debt in Purgatory. Thus she often refused a certain Sister Cecilia leave to drink out of meal-time, bidding her offer the privation to our Lord, in union with the thirst He endured upon the Cross. The Sister died, and appeared to her Prioress at the end of three days, telling her that she would have had to stay a considerable time in Purgatory, but that on the third day her Guardian Angel had come and quenched the flames with that water of which she had felt it so hard to deprive

Aug. 17 herself when on earth, and that she was now taking her flight to heaven. Another Sister had fallen into a state of tepidity and extreme disrelish for all her spiritual duties. Blessed Emily, perceiving her haste to get out of Choir, and learning the cause from her own lips, commanded her, in virtue of obedience, henceforth to be the last to leave the Choir. The Sister obeyed, and from that day not only did all her disrelish for prayer vanish away, but she took pleasure in prolonging her devotions for a considerable time after her companions had retired.

The holy Prioress had the most ardent love for Jesus in the Adorable Sacrament. She was permitted to communicate thrice in the week and on all festivals, which in those days was unusually frequent Communion. Her humility took alarm, and she resolved to abstain for a time from approaching the Holy Table. But our Lord would not allow His Spouse to fall into this dangerous delusion. He appeared to her radiant with celestial glory, saying: "Beloved Spouse, why art thou afraid to approach My Banquet? Have I not prepared it on purpose that I might feed thee with My Flesh and Blood? Come without fear, and look not so much at thine own vileness, but rather on the loving pity which has moved Me to institute this Sacrament for the happiness of My creatures. Learn that those who receive Me out of love please Me infinitely more than those who keep away from Me out of fear." Reassured by this vision, the servant of God thenceforth hungered more and more after the Bread of Angels. One day she was detained at the bedside of a sick Sister, and thus prevented from communicating with the rest. As soon as she was free, she went to the Choir and lovingly offered to our Lord the great privation which she had suffered. An Angel

immediately appeared and brought her Holy Communion in the sight of all her Sisters. **Aug. 17**

Blessed Emily was very devout to the Passion of our Lord, and He promised her to grant an increase of the three theological virtues to all who should recite three Paters and Aves daily at about three o'clock in the afternoon, in honour of His Crucifixion. Our Lady also instructed her to say three Paters and Aves for the dying, in gratitude for the agony and bloody sweat of her Divine Son, telling her at the same time that this devotion was very pleasing to Him. When the city of Vercelli was visited by violent and prolonged rain, the Blessed Virgin taught her some prayers of special efficacy against storms. The servant of God had very great faith in the power of the sign of the Cross and of holy water, and was endowed with the gift of miracles.

At length, at the age of seventy-six, she was seized with her last illness. Having received the Holy Sacraments with much devotion, embraced each of her Sisters and spoken to them words of edification, with the holy names of "Jesus, Mary, Dominic" on her lips, she departed to her Spouse on the 3rd of May, which was her birthday, A.D. 1314. She was beatified by Pope Clement XIV.

Prayer

O God, who gavest unto Blessed Emily, Thy Virgin, grace to despise all earthly things and to seek Thee alone, grant, through her merits and intercessions, that, despising all perishable allurements, we may love Thee with our whole heart. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AUGUST 23

Blessed James of Mevania, Confessor

(A.D. 1220-1301)

Aug. 23 BLESSED JAMES was born at Mevania, now called Bevagna, a little town in Umbria, of the noble family of the Bianconi, in the year 1220. On the day of his birth there appeared in the sky above his native place three large and brilliant stars, each bearing on its disk the image of a Friar Preacher. On beholding this extraordinary phenomenon, which lasted all through the night and part of the following day, the children of Bevagna began to run through the streets, crying out, "To the schools! To the schools! Behold the new masters whom Heaven is sending us." As Blessed Ambrose of Siena was born that same year and Saint Thomas Aquinas some five years later, the prodigy has since been regarded as having had reference to these three great luminaries of the Church and of the Order.

Little James was carefully brought up by his pious parents and gave early signs of his future holiness. He prayed much and fasted often; and a sudden and unlooked for reconciliation between his family and that of the Alberti, with whom they had been at variance, was regarded as due to the prayers and merits of the saintly child. When he was sixteen, two Dominicans came to preach the Lent at Bevagna. Blessed James attended their sermons, closely studied their manner of life, and began to feel himself drawn to the new Order. After his Communion on Maundy Thursday, as he was devoutly reciting that verse of the 118th Psalm, "Set before me for a law the way

of Thy justifications, O Lord, and I will always seek after it," he received an inward assurance that his vocation was from heaven. He immediately went to one of the Fathers and opened his heart to him on the subject. He was told to spend the night in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and to fast on the morrow on bread and water, in order to be more fully assured of the Divine will in the matter. He obeyed, and Saint Dominic then appeared to him and said, "My son, put thy design into execution, for I have chosen thee by order of the Lord, and I will be ever with thee." After Easter, the holy youth returned with the Fathers to their Convent at Spoleto and entered on his noviceship with great fervour. During the early years of his religious life he made it his constant petition to God that he might have the grace to labour efficaciously at the work of his own sanctification, in order to be able later on to contribute to that of others.

Blessed James went through his studies with distinction and was afterwards employed in teaching and preaching, with much fruit of souls. After a time he was sent to Bevagna, then torn by hostile factions. He succeeded in restoring peace and concord amongst his fellow-citizens, and in purging the town of heresy, immorality, and superstition, and obtained leave to establish a Convent of the Order in its midst, of which he became Prior. His exact observance of the Rule made him a living pattern to his subjects. He was specially severe with himself in the matter of poverty. One day, his mother, seeing his tattered habit, gave him some money to provide himself with a new one. Now it happened, that, at that time, he was much in want of a crucifix for his cell, and he accordingly spent his mother's alms in buying one. When next she saw him, she reproached him for what he had done,

Aug. 23

Aug. 23 bidding him notice the rags in which he was clothed but he answered sweetly, "Mother, I have not disobeyed your wishes. Does not Saint Paul bid us 'put on the Lord Jesus'? That is the garment which I have purchased."

One day when he was praying, probably before this very crucifix, in an hour of great anguish of spirit, and begging of God to give him some assurance of his eternal salvation, a stream of blood burst from the side of the sacred image and flowed over his face and clothes, and at the same time he heard a voice saying, "Let this blood be to thee as a sign of thy salvation!" For a long time he was unable to obliterate the traces of this miraculous favour, and the joy which it caused him so quickened the fervour of the Divine love in his heart, that he ceased not to sigh after the moment when he should "be dissolved and be with Christ."

On the Feast of the Assumption, A.D. 1301, our Lord appeared to him with the joyful tidings that in a week's time He would take him to Himself; telling him that Our Lady should be present at his death, because he had spent on adorning her image some money which had been given him to buy clothes for himself; Saint George should be there, because he had enlarged his church; and Saint Dominic, because he had worn his habit. After receiving the Last Sacraments with much devotion, he called for a glass of water, which he blessed, and it was instantly changed into the most delicious wine, of which he drank himself, as did also all the by-standers, and yet the contents of the glass were not diminished. This miraculous wine was preserved for more than two centuries and was the means of working many miracles. At length, the glass which contained it was contemptuously broken by a heretic, who had made his way into the Sacristy where it was kept, and the precious contents were lost. When the

Brethren were reciting the prayers prescribed by the Constitutions for the repose of the soul of Blessed James, a heavenly voice stopped them with the words, "Pray not for him, but invoke him for yourselves." His body remained incorrupt, and a vast number of miracles were worked through his intercession. Pope Boniface IX. in A.D. 1400 approved of the veneration which had always been paid to Blessed James, and Clement X., A.D. 1674, gave permission for the celebration of his festival. In fact, he is often spoken of as Saint James of Mevania, two Sovereign Pontiffs having attributed to him that title and the process of his canonization having passed through all but the final stages. Aug. 23

Prayer

O God, who by the miraculous sprinkling of Thy Blood wast pleased to strengthen Blessed James, Thy Confessor, with a sure confidence of his eternal salvation, enlarge the same bowels of mercy towards us, that, being marked with the sign of our redemption, we may be counted amongst the sheep of Thy right hand for ever. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AUGUST 28

Saint Augustine, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor of the Church

(A.D. 354-430)

THIS great Doctor of the Church was born at Aug. 28 Tagaste, in the north of Africa, in the year 354. His father, Patricius, was a Pagan and only received baptism shortly before his death; his mother, Monica, was a Saint. Seeing the extraordinary talents of his

Aug. 28 son, Patricius spared no expense to give him the best education in his power, and, when he had attained the age of sixteen, sent him to complete his studies at Carthage. The young Augustine had already fallen into bad company, and although he devoted himself with ardour to the acquisition of rhetoric and philosophy, his life was one of sinful indulgence. He embraced the errors of the Manichæan heretics, in which he continued for several years. After his father's death, when he was about twenty years of age, he returned to Tagaste and set up a school of grammar and rhetoric. Meanwhile his holy mother ceased not to weep and pray for his conversion. One day she had had recourse to a Bishop, begging him to use his influence to reclaim Augustine from his evil ways, but he only bade her continue her prayers, adding: "Go your way. God bless you. It cannot be that the child of such tears should perish."

After a time Augustine removed to Rome, and then obtained a post as master of rhetoric at Milan, whither his mother followed him. Here he became acquainted with the holy Bishop, Saint Ambrose, and frequently attended his sermons. God was meanwhile opening his eyes more and more to the emptiness of those earthly ambitions on which his heart had hitherto been set, and, after long and painful struggles with himself, he at length made up his mind to renounce sin and embrace the Catholic faith. He was baptized by Saint Ambrose on Easter Eve, A.D. 387. Towards the close of the same year he resolved to return to Africa, and was on the point of embarking when the death of his mother, Saint Monica, at the port of Ostia, caused him to delay his voyage till the following autumn.

On arriving at Tagaste, he took up his abode in a country-house, where, in company with some pious

friends, he devoted himself to the exercises of prayer, **Aug. 28** study, and penance. After his ordination to the priesthood he removed to Hippo, where he founded another Monastery, and later on a Convent for nuns, of which his sister became the first Abbess. Valerius, Bishop of Hippo, employed him in the office of preaching, and made him his coadjutor, A.D. 395; and, when that prelate died in the following year, the Saint, sorely against his own will, became his successor in the Episcopate. He induced all his clergy to renounce their property and live with him in community. He spent great part of the revenues of the Church in relieving those in distress, and succeeded in establishing amongst his flock the charitable custom of clothing all the poor of each parish once a year. He would suffer no one to defame his neighbour's character, and, to show his disapproval of the vice of detraction, would withdraw from the company as soon as any injurious words were spoken in his presence.

Besides the admirable book of his "Confessions," Saint Augustine has enriched the Church with a vast number of learned works, sermons, instructions, and letters. In spite of habitual weak health and frequent suffering, he was indefatigable in his labours for the exaltation of the Church and for the extirpation of heresy and schism, especially directing his efforts against the Manichees, Pelagians, and Donatists. He was the oracle of his day, and is generally regarded as the greatest of the Latin Fathers.

The closing years of this Saint were saddened by the incursions of the Vandals into Africa, and his holy death took place in the year 430, whilst his episcopal city of Hippo was being besieged by these barbarians. Humility had ever been his characteristic virtue, according to his own beautiful maxim: "Attempt not to attain true wisdom by any other way than that which

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Aug. 28 God has enjoined. This is, in the first, second, and third place, humility ; and this would I answer as often as you ask me. Not that there are no other precepts ; but, unless humility go before, accompany, and follow after, all that we do will be snatched out of our hands by pride. . . . Our Lord Jesus Christ was made so low in order to teach us humility."

This illustrious Doctor of the Church has a special claim on the love and veneration of the children of Saint Dominic, as they serve God under the Rule which bears his name, and which he wrote for the nuns of the Convent which he had founded. When, in the year 1215, the holy Father, Saint Dominic, applied to Pope Innocent III. for permission to found his Order, the Council of Lateran had just decreed that no new Orders were to be established in the Church ; but that, if any one desired to found a new religious House, he was to observe the rule of one of the approved Orders. The Sovereign Pontiff, therefore, though convinced of the Divine will as regarded the institution of the Order of Preachers, was unwilling to act in direct contradiction to a principle so recently laid down. Hence he bade the holy Founder return to France, and, in concert with his companions, choose one of the ancient rules which should seem best fitted for their purpose. Saint Dominic accordingly assembled his Brethren at Prouille, and, after earnestly invoking the Holy Spirit, they made choice of the Rule of Saint Augustine, under which the holy Patriarch had himself lived ever since he had assumed the habit of a Canon Regular at Osma, and which they had all hitherto observed. The simplicity of this Rule, which merely enjoins the essential virtues of poverty, chastity, obedience, and fraternal charity, rendered it a suitable basis for the Constitutions by which Saint Dominic was to mould the religious life of his sons and daughters.

Prayer

Give ear, O Lord, to our prayers, and, by the inter- **Aug. 28**
cession of Blessed Augustine, Thy Confessor and
Bishop, favourably bestow the effects of Thy accus-
tomed mercy on us, to whom Thou hast given reason
to trust in Thy goodness. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

AUGUST 30**Saint Rose of Lima, Virgin****(A.D. 1586-1617)**

THIS "first flower of sanctity in the New World," **Aug. 30**
was born at Lima, the capital of Peru, in South
America, on the 20th of April, A.D. 1586, and re-
ceived in baptism the name of Isabel, but was always
called Rose in consequence of a beautiful rose having
appeared in the air over her cradle, gently touching
her face and then vanishing. Later on, our Blessed
Lady was pleased to add her own name to that of
Rose, saying to her in vision, "Henceforth thou shalt
be called Rose of Saint Mary. Thy soul shall be a
fragrant flower consecrated to Jesus of Nazareth."
Even from infancy the choicest graces were showered
down on this favourite of Heaven, and at the age of
five she consecrated her virginity to God by vow.
She was granted even at this early age a wonderful
gift of prayer, kept herself continually in the presence
of God, and made use of everything she saw and
heard as a means to lift up her heart to Him. She
was divinely inspired from her childhood upwards to
practise in an heroic degree those virtues of penance
and mortification which were to be among the most
striking characteristics of her future sanctity. She

Aug. 30 knew that the Beloved of her soul had endured torments and death for her; and her love for Him found expression in inflicting the severest sufferings on herself. She offered all her austerities to Him, in expiation for her own sins and those of others, for the needs of the Church, the conversion of sinners, and the relief of the poor souls in Purgatory. She was very fond of fruit; from the age of four she absolutely forbade herself the use of it, and deprived her body as far as possible of everything which is pleasing to the senses. As she grew older, her scanty food consisted of hard crusts, tepid and nauseous water, and a soup of bitter herbs mingled with gall and ashes. On Fridays she took only bread and gall. She sometimes entirely deprived herself of food for a whole week, and in the heat of a tropical climate would, for weeks at a time, abstain altogether from drinking. Her bed was composed of rough logs strewn with bits of broken glass and earthenware. She denied herself even the scanty and troubled sleep she might have obtained on this instrument of torture, devising all sorts of painful expedients for keeping herself awake, that she might watch with her Lord.

In addition to these and many other austerities, she took a severe discipline several times in the day, and wore on her head, dexterously concealed beneath her veil, a triple silver crown armed with ninety-nine sharp points, in memory of the crown of thorns of her Divine Spouse. On one occasion, when her mother insisted on placing a wreath of flowers on her head, Rose fastened it with a needle, which she ran so deeply into the flesh that it could with difficulty be removed at night. In the midst of all these terrible self-inflicted sufferings, the Saint's face was always serene and cheerful; and she showed perfect readiness

to obey her confessors in everything which related to **Aug. 30** her penitential exercises.

Saint Rose was the most loving and dutiful of daughters, and devoted ten hours every day to working with her needle for the support of her family; for, though the De Flores were of noble descent, they were in very straitened circumstances. She had to undergo a painful persecution from her friends on account of her refusal to marry. Soon after this, she built herself a little wooden cell in a remote part of the garden, and there she spent the entire day in solitude, only returning to the house late at night. This little cell became to her a paradise of delights. As she sat at her work, her Divine Spouse would often appear to her in the form of an infant of surpassing beauty, lying on her book or on her cushion, stretching out His little arms to her, and telling her that, as she wished to belong entirely to Him, so He wished to be all hers, to take her heart and to give her His in exchange.

Like all faithful servants of God, Saint Rose had to suffer continual assaults from the devil, and, for the last sixteen years of her life, she was required to bear for an hour or more every day the most terrible spiritual desolation, in which her memory was completely obscured and she seemed to herself to be enduring the torments of Purgatory or Hell. But she manfully combated the attacks of the evil one with the arms of profound humility and boundless confidence in God, and in her dereliction abandoned herself wholly to the Divine will.

From childhood she had earnestly desired to wear the Dominican habit, with which her beloved patroness and model, Saint Catharine of Siena, had been clothed; and in the twenty-first year of her age she was admitted into the Third Order, continuing to reside,

Aug. 30 as before, in her parents' house. Our Lord was pleased mystically to espouse her to Himself with the words, "Rose of My heart, be thou My Spouse." From that time He took upon Himself to provide for the wants of her family, leaving the Saint free to devote her time to the service of the poor, the sick, and the afflicted. In her zeal for souls she was a true daughter of Saint Dominic, and was spiritually envious of missionaries whose sex and vocation enabled them to carry the light of faith to the Indians and die a martyr's death.

The last three years of her life were spent under the roof of Don Gonzalo de Massa, who held an important post under the Viceroy, and whose wife was tenderly attached to her. It was in the house of these kind friends that she was attacked by her last illness, and there she died, repeating the words: "Jesus, Jesus be with me," on the 24th of August, A.D. 1617. Many miracles and heavenly favours have been granted through her intercession. She was beatified by Clement IX., A.D. 1668, and canonized by Clement X., A.D. 1671, and has been declared Patroness of America and of the Philippine Islands.

Prayer

Almighty God, the Giver of all good gifts, who wast pleased that Blessed Rose, early watered by the dew of Thy grace, should flourish in the Indies in all the beauty of virginity and patience, grant unto us, Thy servants, that, running in the odour of her sweetness, we may be found worthy to become the good odour of Christ. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 3

Blessed Guala, Bishop and Confessor

(A.D. 1244)

BLESSED GUALA was born of noble parents at Bergamo in Italy, towards the close of the twelfth century. When our holy Father, Saint Dominic, came to preach and to found a Convent of the Order in that city, Guala was the first to receive the habit from his hands. He accompanied the holy Patriarch to Bologna, and was employed by him in the foundation of the Monastery of Saint Agnes for the Sisters in that city, and afterwards in founding the Order at Brescia. It was whilst he was Prior in this latter place that he was favoured with a revelation of the glory of his holy Patriarch. Having prayed for him on the 6th of August, A.D. 1221, believing him to be still lying sick at Bologna, he fell asleep, leaning against the belfry of the church, and he seemed to see two ladders let down from an opening in the sky above him. At the top of one stood our Divine Lord, and His Blessed Mother was at the summit of the other. Angels were going up and down the ladders, and at their foot was seated one clothed in the habit of the Order, but his face was covered with his hood, in the manner in which the Friars were wont to cover the face of the dead when carried out for burial. The ladders were drawn up into heaven, and he saw the unknown Friar received into the company of the angels, surrounded by dazzling glory, and borne to the very feet of Jesus. Guala awoke, not knowing what the vision might mean, and, hastening to Bologna, he found that his

Sep. 3

Sep. 3 great Patriarch had breathed his last at the very moment at which it had appeared to him. This vision is commemorated in the 3rd Antiphon of Lauds of our holy Father's Office: "*Scala cæli prominens*," &c.

Father Bartholomew of Trent, who was an intimate friend of Blessed Guala's, relates, that, when Saint Dominic's Office was celebrated for the first time at Bologna after his canonization, Blessed Guala, who by that time had been raised to the episcopal dignity, came to keep the joyful festival with his Brethren, and that they made him sing the Antiphon commemorative of his own vision, which he did with the utmost devotion.

Contemporary writers tell us that Blessed Guala was "a man of consummate prudence, acquainted with the world, of distinguished manners, a true religious, and an eloquent preacher; and that these qualities gained for him unparalleled influence both at the Papal and Imperial Courts." He also enjoyed great popularity in Lombardy, where he did much to restore peace and concord between the rival factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines. Whilst still a simple Friar, he was invested with the dignity of Apostolic Legate, and succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation between the Pope and the Emperor, Frederic II. It was probably about A.D. 1230 that he was made Bishop of Brescia. He governed his diocese with so much zeal, charity, prudence, and holiness, that he earned for himself the title of Father of the poor and Advocate of widows and orphans. After undergoing many trials in defence of the liberties of his Church, he was driven into exile by hostile factions, and spent five years in retirement and study in a Convent of the Order of Val Umbrosa, near Bergamo. Returning at length to his See, he was welcomed back with universal joy, and again sedulously devoted himself to all the duties of a

good pastor. In the year 1244, he was invited to Bergamo to lay the foundation-stone of the Church of Saint Stephen. Scarcely was the solemn rite concluded when the holy Bishop was struck down by mortal illness. He died in the Convent of Astino on the 3rd of September. Blessed Guala has always been honoured as a Saint, and many miracles have been worked at his tomb. He was beatified by Pius IX. Sep. 3

Prayer

O God, who didst adorn Blessed Guala, Confessor and Bishop, with a singular grace for establishing Thy people in peace and piety, grant us by his intercession, that, sedulously following the ways of peace, we may obtain abundant fruits of piety. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 5

Blessed Catharine of Raconigi, Virgin

(A.D. 1486-1547)

BLESSED CATHARINE was born at Raconigi in Piedmont, A.D. 1486. The place of her birth was an old half-ruined hut, exposed to all the inclemency of the weather, for her parents had been reduced to extreme poverty in consequence of the war then raging between the Duke of Savoy and the Marquis of Saluzzo. The child had to suffer many hardships from her infancy, but she bore all with patience, and even in those tender years was honoured with many wonderful tokens of the Divine favour. One day she broke a cup which her mother greatly valued, and, as she was weeping inconsolably in expectation of being severely punished, a beautiful child suddenly appeared in the room, picked up the broken pieces, restored the cup to Sep. 5

Sep. 5 her whole and entire, and then vanished from her sight. At the age of five, our Blessed Lady mystically espoused her to the Infant Jesus, in presence of many angels and saints, and in particular of Saint Jerome, Saint Peter Martyr, and Saint Catharine of Siena. On this occasion, our Divine Lord gave these three Saints to her as her special patrons and protectors, and also commanded a seraph to watch over her for the remainder of her life, in addition to the angel who had guarded her from her birth. Her heavenly espousals with the Beloved of her soul were renewed on two subsequent occasions with circumstances of great solemnity.

When she was fourteen, as she was praying earnestly before daybreak on the Feast of Saint Stephen, and telling that glorious Protomartyr that the Apostles had especially given women into his keeping, and that therefore she hoped he would take her under his protection and help her to preserve her virginity, he appeared to her, bidding her be of good courage, for her prayer was heard, and she should presently be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then three rays of light descended upon her, and she heard a voice saying: "I am come to dwell in thee, and to purge, illuminate, enkindle, and animate thy soul." Nor was this the only time on which she visibly received the Holy Ghost. He had come upon her in the form of a dove when she was only five years old; and He came on two later occasions, once as a shining cloud, and again under the form of tongues of fire.

One Christmas night, as she was meditating on the birth of the Divine Infant, the seraph who had been given as her guardian transported her to Bethlehem, where she beheld the Holy Child in vision, and was permitted to take Him into her arms and caress Him.

Several times her Divine Spouse took her heart out of her body to cleanse and beautify it, as He had done to her patroness, Saint Catharine of Siena. Indeed, the tokens of Divine favour granted to her bore a strong resemblance to those bestowed on the seraphic Saint of Siena, and the whole character of the sanctity of both was, so to speak, cast in the same mould. Sep. 5

Like Saint Catharine, she became a member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, still continuing to live amongst seculars; like her, too, she received the impression of the sacred Stigmata, which, by her own request, were invisible to the eyes of others. She was permitted to share in the sufferings caused to her Divine Spouse by His crown of thorns; she often received Holy Communion in a miraculous manner; and, like Saint Thomas Aquinas, she was girded by the hands of angels. The words, "*Jesu, spes mea*," "Jesus my Hope," were several times inscribed in letters of gold upon her heart.

And all the while this wonderful life of visions and raptures was being lived, Blessed Catharine's surroundings were those of a poor peasant woman, obliged to work hard to earn daily bread for herself and her family. She would sometimes feel tempted to repine at being thus continually kept at her weaving without a moment's respite; and once, when she was only nine years old, as she thought of the hunger and want her poor mother had to endure, she leant her head on her loom and burst into tears, fervently commending the misery of her home to the providence of God. Then her Divine Spouse appeared to her under the form of a child as forlorn and destitute as herself and asked an alms of her. She answered, that, much as she would have desired to help Him, she had not then a single thing on earth that she could bestow. Then the Holy Child made Himself known to her, gave her a piece of

Sep. 5 money to provide food for the family, and encouraged her to bear poverty cheerfully after His example.

As a true daughter of Saint Dominic, Blessed Catharine was full of zeal for souls, and once besought her Divine Spouse to shut the mouth of Hell. When told that her desire was an impossible one, she implored that He would exercise His justice on herself and have compassion on poor sinners. She was often taken in a miraculous manner to visit persons who lived at a great distance from her home, that she might warn them of the spiritual dangers which threatened them. By her prayers and penances she obtained the release of many souls from Purgatory, and she was sometimes permitted to take their sufferings upon herself, and thus to hasten their admission to the joys of Paradise.

After a life of wonderful union with God and entire self-renunciation, she died, abandoned by her friends and deprived even of her Confessor, on September 4, A.D. 1547, in her sixty-second year. She was beatified by Pius VII.

Prayer

O Lord, our Hope, who didst enrich with an abundance of celestial gifts the heart of Blessed Catharine, already filled with Thee, grant, through the intercession of that glorious Virgin, that He may be wholly fastened to our hearts, who for our sakes was wholly fastened to the cross, Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 6

Blessed Bertrand of Garrigua, Confessor

(A. D. 1230)

BLESSED BERTRAND was a native of Garrigua, a little place in the South of France, apparently a fief or farm belonging to the Cistercian Abbey of Our Lady at Bosquet. He was brought up by the nuns of that Abbey, and received an education which fitted him for Holy Orders. From his youth he had had sad and personal experience of the terrible condition to which the ravages of the Albigensian heretics had reduced the fair provinces of Southern France. In the year 1200, Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse, had overrun the country at the head of an army of these miscreants, directing his attacks chiefly on the monasteries and churches. Blessed Bertrand's kind benefactresses, the good nuns of Bosquet, had been obliged to seek refuge in flight; and their abbey might have been razed to the ground, had not one of their vassals had the happy inspiration to overturn some beehives which stood on the walls, and the exasperated bees drove the enemy back in confusion.

It was quite natural, therefore, that as soon as he was ordained priest, Blessed Bertrand should volunteer to join the mission then being conducted by the Cistercian monks to reclaim the people from the errors of the Albigenses, and thus become acquainted with our Holy Father, Saint Dominic, who was then taking part in the same holy enterprise. From the first day that they met, a common sympathy in divine things knit their hearts together. Thus the ancient chroniclers of the Order speak of Blessed Bertrand as "the

Sep. 6 beloved companion of Dominic," "the dearest associate in all his labours, the sharer in his devotions," "the imitator of his sanctity," and "the inseparable companion of his journeys." "By his watchings, his fasts, and his other penances he succeeded," says Bernard Guidonis, "in so perfectly imprinting on his own person the likeness of his beloved Father, that one might have said, seeing him pass by, 'Truly the disciple is like the master; there goes the very portrait of Saint Dominic.'"

After making his profession at Prouille on the Feast of the Assumption, A.D. 1217, in company with the other fifteen first companions of the holy Patriarch, Blessed Bertrand was one of those chosen to lay the foundations of the Order in Paris; and two years later we find him again visiting that city, on this latter occasion as the companion of Saint Dominic. The details of this journey Blessed Jordan learnt from Blessed Bertrand's own lips. The two holy travellers, going from Toulouse by way of Rocamadour, spent the night devoutly in that celebrated sanctuary of Our Lady. The next day, as they travelled along, they overtook some German pilgrims and were miraculously enabled to understand their language. In an earlier journey made by Blessed Bertrand in the Saint's company, they remained untouched by torrents of rain which fell around them.

It is related of Blessed Bertrand, that he constantly wept for his sins, for which he was wont to do excessive penance. Saint Dominic, however, reproved him, and enjoined him rather to weep and pray for the sins of others. And this charge had such an effect on the soul of Blessed Bertrand, that from that time, even if he wished, he was not able to weep for his own sins; but, when he mourned for those of others, his tears would flow in great abundance. He was accustomed

every day to say Mass for sinners ; and being asked by one Brother Benedict, a prudent man, why he so rarely celebrated Mass for the dead and so frequently for sinners, he replied : " We are certain of the salvation of the faithful departed, whereas *we* remain tossed about in many perils." " Then," said Brother Benedict, " if there were two beggars, the one with all his limbs sound, and the other quite disabled, which would you compassionate the most ? " And he replied : " The one certainly who can do least for himself." " If so," said Brother Benedict, " such certainly are the dead, who have neither mouth to confess nor hands to work, but who ask our help ; whereas living sinners have mouths and hands, and with them can take care of themselves." Blessed Bertrand, however, remained unconvinced. But the following night there appeared to him a terrible vision of a departed soul, who with a bundle of wood pressed and weighed upon him after a strange fashion ; and, waking him up more than ten times that same night, marvelously vexed and troubled him. Therefore, the following morning he called Brother Benedict to him and told him all that had befallen him in the night ; and then religiously and with many tears going to the altar, he offered the Holy Sacrifice for the departed, and from that time very frequently did the same.

After filling the office of Prior of Saint Romain's at Toulouse, Blessed Bertrand was appointed the first Provincial of Provence, which then included the whole of Southern France. He devoted himself earnestly to the work of preaching up to the time of his death, which took place at the Abbey of Bosquet, about A.D. 1230. Twenty-three years afterwards, his body was found whole and incorrupt. The precious remains were sacrilegiously burnt by the Huguenots in the six-

Sep. 6

Sep. 6 tenth century, but the devotion to him has subsisted even to our own day. He was beatified by Pope Leo XIII.

Prayer

O God, who didst give to the Blessed Patriarch, Saint Dominic, Blessed Bertrand as an excellent companion and imitator, grant us, through his pious intercession, so to walk in his footsteps as to obtain his rewards. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 15

**The Commemoration of our Holy Father,
Saint Dominic, in Soriano**

(A.D. 1530)

Sep. 15 THE event commemorated in this festival is the appearance in the Dominican Convent of Soriano, in the extreme south of Italy, of a miraculous picture of Saint Dominic, which is still preserved, and is held in the utmost veneration even in our own day. A certain Father Vincent of Catanzara in Calabria, in the year 1510, was thrice commanded by Saint Dominic in vision to found a Convent of the Order at Soriano, a work which he accomplished in spite of considerable obstacles which were not overcome without miraculous intervention. It had been decided that the Convent should be built on the plain, but the cross which had been planted to mark the destined site was found to have been mysteriously removed in the night to the hill on which the building was eventually erected, and where it still stands.

Several years later, on September 15, A.D. 1530, just as the religious were assembling to chant Matins

Sep. 15

at midnight, the Sacristan suddenly beheld three ladies of majestic aspect enter the church, which he knew he had left locked before retiring to rest. One of them addressed him, asking to whom the church was dedicated and whether it contained a picture of its patron. The Friar replied that the church was dedicated to Saint Dominic, but that, owing to the great poverty of the Community, only a badly painted fresco of the Saint was to be found upon its walls. Then the unknown lady put into his hands a roll of canvas, which till then she had carried in her hand, and bade him take it to his Superior, who bore the title of Vicar, the little Convent not having yet been erected into a Priory. The Vicar, astonished at the sight of the picture, which proved to be a portrait of Saint Dominic, hastened to the church to thank the giver, but all three mysterious visitors had disappeared, though the outer doors still remained locked. The following night Saint Catharine of Alexandria appeared to one of the Fathers, who had a great devotion to her, and told him, in answer to his prayers, that the donor of the picture was no other than the Blessed Virgin, and that the two who had accompanied her were the patronesses of the Order, Saint Mary Magdalen and herself.

In obedience to the express command given by Our Lady to the Sacristan when bestowing the picture, it was placed over the High Altar; but, as the wall against which it hung was extremely damp, the Fathers afterwards decided on removing it to another altar, near the door of the church. The following morning, however, the picture was again found hanging over the High Altar. The Vicar, believing that it had been removed thither by the Sacristan from a desire to execute to the letter the orders given him by the Mother of God, severely reprovved him, and had the picture carried back to the altar agreed upon. The

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Sep. 25 next day, it once more appeared over the High Altar. Again the Sacristan was charged with obstinacy and disobedience. In vain he protested that he had never touched the picture. The Vicar ordered it to be replaced near the door, and on the following night locked the church himself and kept the keys in his own possession. Nevertheless on the third morning it was again discovered over the High Altar. Convinced at length that its removal was the work of no human hand, the Vicar allowed it to remain in the spot which Our Lady had chosen for it, and where it has ever since remained, miraculously preserved from being injured by the damp.

When the picture was exposed to public veneration, a multitude of prodigies took place, the account of which fills volumes. No less than sixteen hundred of these miracles, juridically attested, took place within the space of seventy-eight years.

Pope Innocent XII., in the year 1644, granted a festival in commemoration of this event and of the vast number of miracles vouchsafed before the holy picture.

On September 15, A.D. 1870, just five days before the sacrilegious occupation of Rome by the troops of Victor Emmanuel, a new prodigy took place at Soriano. A wooden statue of our holy Father, Saint Dominic, of life-size, had been exposed in the sanctuary on occasion of the festival, and was to be carried in procession in the evening. This statue was suddenly seen to move like a preacher in the pulpit; it advanced and drew back; the right arm rose and fell; the countenance became animated, sometimes assuming a severe and threatening aspect, at other times appearing sad, or again full of sweetness and reverence as it turned towards the picture of our Lady of the Rosary. This extraordinary spectacle lasted for an hour and a half, and was witnessed by about two thousand persons. Some

of the bystanders, to satisfy themselves that there was no trickery in the matter, removed all the surroundings of the statue and completely stripped the table on which it was standing. These measures only served to place the miraculous nature of the occurrence beyond the possibility of a doubt. A juridical inquiry was held by order of the Bishop of Mileto, in whose diocese Soriano is situated, and the extraordinary event was announced to the Order in a circular letter by the Most Reverend Father Alexander Vincent Jandel, who was then General. In a private letter written by his Paternity shortly afterwards he says : "I think our holy Father, Saint Dominic, meant to warn us of the impending scourges, and to summon us to do penance; but this warning is in itself an act of mercy on the part of Him who strikes only to heal."

Prayer

O God, who hast vouchsafed to enlighten Thy Church by the merits and teachings of Thy blessed Confessor, our holy Father, Saint Dominic, grant at his intercession that it may never be destitute of temporal help, and may always increase in spiritual growth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 16

Blessed Imelda Lambertini, Virgin

PATRONESS OF FIRST COMMUNICANTS

(A.D. 1322-1333)

BLESSED IMELDA was born at Bologna in Italy **Sep. 16** about A.D. 1322, of the family of the Lambertini, distinguished alike for nobility and piety. Her father was a rich, brave, and powerful nobleman, who filled several important posts and was remarkable for his

Sep. 16 charity to the poor, and especially to the mendicant religious orders. His wife, Castora, was worthy of him. She had a particular devotion to pray for the souls in Purgatory, and for their relief she multiplied her charitable donations to monasteries and churches.

Like the Child Jesus, Imelda grew in wisdom, age, and grace with God and men. From her earliest years she took little interest in the ordinary amusements of her age, but listened eagerly to holy stories and religious instruction, and gave herself entirely to a life of devotion. She made a little oratory for herself, wherein she delighted in reciting the Psalms and other prayers.

When Imelda had entered on her tenth year, she was placed in the Dominican Convent of Saint Mary Madalen, situated at Val di Pietra, at the foot of the hills which lie to the south of Bologna. The laws of the Church which now regulate the age for admission to the noviciate had not then been enacted; it may well have been, therefore, that little Imelda actually embraced the religious life at this early age; and this is the view of the case usually taken by the writers of her story. It is possible, however, that her pious parents, as is still sometimes done in Catholic countries, had only vowed her to God and Saint Dominic, to wear the habit for a certain number of years. Imelda was at this time, we are told, remarkably tall for her age, fragile and delicate, and fair as an angel to behold.

The young Saint threw herself heart and soul into the new life which had opened before her. This child of nine years old set herself to practise the austere Rule with most loving fidelity, devoting herself to the exercise of prayer and penance, and by her fervour rendering herself a model even to the oldest and most saintly of the Community. She

erected a little Calvary in the most remote part of the garden, and thither she loved to retire, in order to meditate undisturbed on the sufferings and death of her Divine Spouse. Sep. 16

But her chief devotion was to Jesus hidden in the Sacrament of His love; and with all the ardour of her soul did she long for the happy day when our Lord would unite her to Himself in Holy Communion. "Tell me," she would often say to her religious Sisters, "how is it possible to receive Jesus into one's heart and not to die?"

It appears that it was not then usual in Northern Italy for children to make their First Communion before the age of fourteen. Vainly, therefore, did the little Imelda over and over again beseech her Confessor to allow her to approach the Holy Table. He turned a deaf ear to all her entreaties. But He "who feeds amongst the lilies," and who, when He was on earth, said, "Suffer little children to come to Me, and forbid them not," would not allow the loving young heart to be disappointed.

It was the last of the Rogation Days, May 12, A.D. 1333. The two years which she had now spent in the religious life and the approach of the great festival of the Ascension had caused the flames of Divine love to burn more brightly than ever in the breast of Imelda. All the nuns approached the Holy Table; she alone knelt apart in a corner of the Choir, pouring forth her acts of fervent desire, and weeping bitterly because she was not allowed to share their happiness. The Mass was over; the priest had left the altar; the lights were extinguished; the Community had for the most part dispersed to discharge their various domestic duties; still Imelda knelt on, absorbed in prayer.

Suddenly a heavenly fragrance filled the sacred

Sep. 16 building and diffused itself even beyond its precincts. It drew the Sisters back to the Choir, where a wondrous sight met their eyes. A radiant Host was suspended in the air above the head of the saintly child. Her Heavenly Bridegroom had heard her prayer, and was indeed come to make her all His own.

The astonished nuns immediately summoned the chaplain to the spot. He came in his sacred vestments, with the paten in his hand, and knelt in wondering adoration, awaiting some further manifestation of the Divine will. Then the Host gently descended upon the paten, and the priest communicated Imelda. The transport of love, and joy, and gratitude was too great for the weak bodily frame; the happy child closed her eyes, and, in the kiss of the Lord, breathed forth her pure soul to go and make endless thanksgiving in heaven.

Her holy remains now lie in the little Church of Saint Sigismund at Bologna. She was beatified by Leo XII., A.D. 1826, and is deservedly regarded as the Patroness of First Communicants. Confraternities in her honour have been established in several places, the English Confraternity having its centre at Saint Dominic's Priory, Haverstock Hill, London.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, wounding the Blessed Virgin Imelda with the fire of Thy love, and miraculously feeding her with the Immaculate Host, didst receive her into heaven, grant us, through her intercession, to approach the Holy Table with the same fervour of charity, that we may long to be dissolved, and deserve to be with Thee, who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.



SEPTEMBER 20

Blessed Francis Possadas, Confessor

(A.D. 1643-1713)

BLESSED FRANCIS POSSADAS was born about A.D. **Sep. 20** 1643, at Cordova, in Spain, of a family which had fallen from its ancient position of nobility into a state of poverty. Whilst still an infant, the name of Mary was found miraculously imprinted over his heart, and it was the first that his baby lips were heard to utter. From his earliest years he gave evidence of the tenderest piety. He daily recited the Rosary and practised other exercises of devotion whilst still a child. His mother, who was a very pious woman, seeing his great attraction to religion, wished him to enter the Order of Saint Dominic, and had him educated with that view. But after his father's death she married again, and Francis was cruelly treated by his step-father, who insisted on his giving up his studies and being put to learn some useful trade. This was accordingly done; but the pious youth never abandoned his holy purpose, and by his unfailing obedience and sweetness of temper so won his master's favour as to obtain his leave to continue his studies. He was at last allowed to enter the noviciate in the Dominican Convent of Scala Cœli; but, as a further trial of his constancy, God permitted that his true worth and character should not be at first appreciated by his Brethren and Superiors. He was treated with contempt and harshness, all which he endured with unalterable patience, until at length justice was done him, and the Community, recognising his sanctity and full of admira-



Sep. 20 tion at the wonderful patience with which he had borne their unkindness, unanimously consented to his being admitted to the priesthood.

Blessed Francis led a life of prayer and penance, joined to marvellous activity in labouring for the salvation of souls. He set before himself as his model for imitation the glorious Saint Vincent Ferrer, whom he chose as his special patron. The success which attended his preaching was scarcely less wonderful than that which resulted from the apostolic ministry of Saint Vincent. His example, even more than his inflamed discourses, produced so extraordinary an effect on the hearts of his hearers that he obtained almost boundless influence over them. In his native city of Cordova, he set himself, and that with marvellous success, to the difficult task of reforming the public morals, which were in a state of lamentable corruption. By the power of his preaching, the citizens were at length induced to close all the theatres and places of public amusement, which had formerly been scenes of immorality and disorder.

His chief delight was to minister to the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned, providing for their bodily as well as for their spiritual needs. Very often he was known to continue from sunrise to sunset instructing the poor and ignorant in the mysteries of the faith. He refused all positions of authority in the Order, and could not be induced to accept two bishoprics which were offered to him at different times. So profound was his humility, that he not only exercised the lowliest offices in the House, but even rejoiced in being despised, calumniated, and insulted. He had to undergo terrible conflicts with the devil, from all of which he came forth victorious. He was endowed with the gifts of prophecy, discernment of spirits, and other supernatural favours.

At length, having exercised the duties of a confessor and preacher for about forty years, he calmly slept in the Lord on the 20th of September, A.D. 1713. His heroic virtues having been confirmed by miracles, he was beatified by Pius VII. Sep. 20

Prayer

O God, who didst raise up Blessed Francis, Thy Confessor, imbued with the sweetness of heavenly charity, to be an illustrious preacher of Thy Word, grant, through his intercession, that we may be kindled with the fire of Thy love, and ever live in Thy charity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEPTEMBER 26

Blessed Dalmatius Moner, Confessor

(A. D. 1291-1341)

BLESSED DALMATIUS MONER was born of pious and respectable parents at a small town in Catalonia, about A.D. 1291. From childhood he was distinguished for innocence and piety. He received a good education at Girona, which was completed at the University of Montpellier. Entering the Dominican Order at the age of twenty-five, he made it his lifelong study perfectly to conform his conduct to the requirements of the Rule and Constitutions. He was employed for many years in teaching, but at length humbly resigned this office from a desire to devote himself more closely to the service of God. Sep. 26

Blessed Dalmatius led a life of extreme penance and mortification. He seldom ate anything but herbs and vegetables, almost raw, and in the burning heat of a Spanish summer would entirely abstain from

Sep. 26 drinking for as many as twenty consecutive days. His scanty rest was taken on the bare ground; he afflicted his body with continual fasts, disciplines, and other austerities, and devoted himself day and night to the exercises of prayer and contemplation. He loved to pray in solitary places in the open air, the sights and sounds of nature helping to raise his mind and heart to God. One day when he had been thus satisfying his devotion in a secluded valley, one of his Brethren went in search of him, but could find him nowhere, until, chancing to raise his eyes, he beheld the object of his search raised in ecstasy on a level with the top of a lofty tree which grew on the brow of the adjacent hill. Nor was it an unusual sight to see him thus suspended in the air. Blessed Dalmatius practised the most rigid poverty, never taking with him any provisions when on a journey, and even refusing the alms which were offered him. He preferred to put his whole trust in God, who often sent him help in his necessities by the ministry of angels. Every night when he chanted the *Benedicite* at Lauds, these celestial spirits came and sang it with him; and so familiar was his intercourse with them, that he was commonly known by the name of "the Friar who converses with the angels."

To conceal his devotional exercises from the eyes of others, he used to retire by day to a cave which he had found in the neighbouring hills, and at night he would hide himself in some secret part of the church. His love of retirement and the great devotion which he bore to Saint Mary Magdalen induced him to apply for permission to go and end his days at La Sainte Baume in Provence, which for thirty years had been the scene of the prayers, austerities, and raptures of that holy penitent, and which

then, as now, was served by the sons of Saint Dominic. The desired leave was granted, and Blessed Dalmatius visited the hallowed spot with unspeakable devotion, but it was not God's will that he should take up his abode there, and he accordingly returned to Girona. Here he hollowed out a cave for himself, apparently in the Convent grounds, and there lived for four years, never leaving it save when the bell summoned him to the Choir or Refectory with the other Brethren. This penitential abode was dripping with wet and the resort of serpents; but to him it was indeed the gate of heaven.

The miracles of Blessed Dalmatius were very numerous and striking, and he gained many signal victories over the powers of darkness.

He died in his beloved cave, whilst in the act of raising his clasped hands to heaven, on the 24th of September, A.D. 1341. After his death, his countenance, which in life had been very dark and disfigured by his excessive penances, became wonderfully fair and beautiful. He is believed to have preserved his baptismal innocence unsullied throughout his whole life. Blessed Dalmatius is specially invoked for relief from toothache; and it is a frequent custom to dedicate infants to him by vow when they are cutting their teeth, in consequence of the many miracles worked by means of one of his teeth, which is preserved in a silver reliquary in the Sacristy at Girona. He was beatified by Benedict XIII.

Prayer

O God, who didst make Thy humble servant Dalmatius glorious for many miracles and virtues, and didst wonderfully inflame him with Thy love, to the despising of all earthly things, grant, we beseech Thee, through his intercession, that we may

Sep. 26 be disengaged from all earthly affections and freed from all adversities, and have no desire but for the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Rosary Sunday

1st Sunday in October

1st Sun.
in Oct.

THE devotion of the Holy Rosary is the great treasure bequeathed by our holy Father, Saint Dominic, to his Order and to the Church. A certain obscurity hangs over its origin, but a widespread tradition asserts that it was revealed to the Holy Patriarch by our Blessed Lady herself during his labours in Languedoc for the conversion of the Albigensian heretics, and that by preaching his devotion he gathered an immense harvest of souls. Pope Clement VIII. declares that Saint Dominic first established the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary in the Church of Saint Sixtus in Rome, and he is known to have established it also at Palencia in Spain. There can be no doubt that the use of the Hail Mary as a popular devotion dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century; though it is impossible to determine whether the preaching of the Rosary spread the more universal use of the Angelic Salutation, or whether it was the increasing love and popularity of that prayer which moved the holy Patriarch to adopt it.

During the fifteenth century, however, which was a period of general religious declension, the "Roses of Mary," as they had been popularly called, fell into partial oblivion and neglect, until, towards the close of the century, they were revived by the preaching of the celebrated Dominican, Blessed Alan de la Roche, a Breton by birth. It is interesting to be

able to record that in England at least the Rosary never fell into disuse, but enjoyed undiminished popularity all through the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries; and that Henry VI. prescribed that the scholars of Eton College, founded by him in the year 1440, should daily recite "the complete Psalter of the Blessed Virgin, consisting of a *Credo*, fifteen *Patens*, one hundred and fifty *Ave Marias*." It is of course beyond question that the children of Saint Patrick, ever devout to our Blessed Lady, were ever faithful to the devotion of the Rosary; and that in the evil days, as they would rather have given their lives than deny God and His Holy Mother, so they would rather have shed their blood than part with their beads.

1st Sun.
in Oct.

The solemnity which we celebrate on the first Sunday of October, was established in thanksgiving for the great naval victory gained by the Christians over the Turks at Lepanto on Sunday, October 7, A.D. 1571. On that memorable day, all the Confraternities of the Rosary in Rome had assembled in the Dominican Church of the Minerva to offer their devotions for a blessing on the Christian arms through the intercession of Mary. The Pope, Saint Pius V., himself a Friar Preacher, had attended the procession; and, on his return to the Vatican, God was pleased to reveal to him that the Queen of the Holy Rosary had even in that hour obtained a glorious victory for the Christian fleet. In testimony of his gratitude, the Holy Pontiff decreed that the 7th of October should henceforth be kept as the Feast of our Lady of Victories. But Gregory XIII., admiring the modesty of his predecessor, who had not chosen to make mention of the Rosary, for fear he should be deemed to have sought to promote the honour of his Order rather than the spread of truth, ordained that in

1st Sun.
in Oct.

future the Feast of our Lady of Victories should be kept on the first Sunday in October in all Dominican churches and wherever the Confraternity of the Rosary existed, under the new title of the Festival of the Most Holy Rosary, which until that time had been on March 25, the Festival of the Annunciation. This was finally extended to the universal Church by Clement XII., who changed the wording of the Roman Martyrology to its present form: "The commemoration of Holy Mary of Victory, which Pope Pius V. ordained to be observed every year, in memory of a famous victory gained at sea this day by the Christians over the Turks, through the help of the Mother of God; and Gregory XIII. for the same reason likewise ordained that the annual solemnity of the Rosary of the same most Blessed Virgin should be kept on the first Sunday of this month."

In our own day, the devotion of the Holy Rosary has received a fresh impulse from the Encyclical Letters published year after year by our Holy Father, Leo XIII., whom we may call "the Pope of the Rosary," and who has constantly urged on the faithful the use of this salutary devotion, both as an excellent means of personal sanctification, an efficacious form of intercessory prayer, and a powerful weapon against the enemies of the Church. His Holiness has likewise extended to the universal Church the practice, hitherto confined to the Dominican Order, of consecrating the whole month of October in a special manner to our Lady of the Rosary.

Prayer

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that, meditating

on these mysteries in the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

1st Sun.
in Oct.

OCTOBER 3

**Blessed John Massias, Lay Brother,
Confessor**

(A.D. 1585-1645)

BLESSED JOHN MASSIAS was a Spaniard of noble descent, and was born at Rivera, in Castile, A.D. 1585. His parents were very poor in this world's goods, but rich in virtue, and brought the child up very piously. When four years old, little John's mind seemed already to have attained the maturity of manhood. He cared nothing for childish sports and pastimes, but, consecrating himself wholly to Our Lady, resolved to recite her Rosary thrice every day, a practice in which he persevered even until death, to the great profit of his soul. He loved to gather children of his own age around him and to instruct them in holy things. He lost his parents whilst still very young, and had to earn his bread as a shepherd. Whilst tending his flock, he devoted himself to prayer and holy meditation, and received many wonderful supernatural favours. God entrusted him in a special manner to the keeping of Saint John the Evangelist, who used often to appear to him under the form of a beautiful child. Our Lady also frequently visited him, and these two celestial friends would sometimes carry him away with them to a glorious country, which, they told him, was the home in which they dwelt, and which he was one

Oct. 3

Oct. 3 day to inhabit with them. When, after these mysterious journeys, he returned to the hills where he had left his flock, he found it safely tended, having been guarded all the time by a beautiful lady, doubtless no other than the Blessed Virgin herself. Saint John also often rendered him this charitable service during his extasies, collected his sheep for him, and helped him to bring them back to the fold at night. In obedience to the Holy Evangelist, he crossed over to South America, not, like so many of his countrymen, for the sake of gain, but because he had been told that somewhere in that distant land was the place where God willed that he should serve Him.

On reaching the New World, John entered the service of a wealthy man, and was employed for two years and a half in tending cattle in the vast solitudes of those unexplored regions. At length his vocation was made manifest, and he became a lay brother in the Dominican Convent of Saint Mary Magdalen at Lima, a house of strict observance, where he made his profession on January 22, 1623. He treated his body with such extreme severity that his Superiors were compelled to moderate his penitential practices. He allowed himself only one hour for sleep, and this he took kneeling in his cell before a picture of Our Lady, with his head leaning on the bed, or at the foot of the High Altar or Rosary Altar, or on the bare ground in the cloister. His food was very scanty; and he used to collect all that was left from the meals of the Community and distribute it on his knees to the poor with the most tender charity and devotion. His office of porter afforded him many opportunities of serving these suffering members of his Divine Master. He often begged for them in the city, and trained the Convent ass to go alone from house to house to gather alms for them. He daily fed two hundred poor per-

sons, and the wooden spoon is still preserved with Oct. 3
which he distributed the food at the Convent gate, and with which, when his provisions were exhausted, he used to make the sign of the Cross over the empty bowl, whereupon it would immediately be once more filled. He took special care of the bashful poor, and his miracles in the exercise of his charity were very numerous.

The sanctity of Blessed John caused him to be held in very great esteem, so that persons of the highest rank used to come to the Convent to see him, and commend themselves to his prayers. This was a severe trial to his humility, and on such occasions he generally managed to hide from his illustrious visitors. He sincerely regarded himself as the worst of sinners. When his terrific austerities had caused a malady which necessitated his undergoing an extremely painful surgical operation, he bore the long and agonising incisions without a groan, and, when asked how he could remain so motionless beneath the knife, he humbly replied: "I thought I was before the judgment seat of God, and that these torments were inflicted for my sins; and they seemed little in comparison with what I deserved."

Blessed John's devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was very great. He used to serve all the early Masses until the business of the day summoned him from the church, and then he would assist in spirit at the remaining Masses, kneeling in adoration as he caught the distant sound of the Elevation bell. It was his great delight to decorate the church for the great festivals, and especially to adorn the line of procession along which the Most Holy was to be borne on Corpus Christi. In spite of his continual occupations, he daily recited three entire Rosaries on his knees. For fourteen years he was cruelly tormented by devils as

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Oct. 3 soon as he set himself to prayer, but he persevered faithfully and fervently in this holy exercise, in spite of all their efforts to drive him from it. He had a very special love for the crucifix which hung in the porter's room.

His death-bed was a holy and happy scene. The Divine Master whom he had served so lovingly, our Lady of the Rosary, the Beloved Disciple, and many other Saints appeared to him and consoled him; and with the words: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," he tranquilly expired on the 17th of September, A.D. 1645. His miracles both in life and after death were very numerous and remarkable. He was beatified by Gregory XVI.

Prayer

O God, who didst early endow Blessed John, Thy Confessor, with the plenteousness of Thy grace, and madest him illustrious in a lowly estate by the innocence of his life, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to follow his footsteps, that by purity of heart we may be found worthy to attain to Thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

OCTOBER 4

Saint Francis of Assisi, Confessor

(A.D. 1181-1226)

Oct. 4 THE narrow limits of this volume are insufficient for even an epitome of the beautiful life of the Seraphic Saint of Assisi, the fellow-labourer of Saint Dominic in the vineyard of the Lord, and honoured throughout the Order of Preachers under the title of the Holy Father, Saint Francis. It will, however, be of interest to note some of the spiritual links which bind together these

two holy Patriarchs, each the founder of a triple Order and Father of a countless progeny of Saints.

When Saint Francis, in the year 1210, came to the Eternal City to solicit from Pope Innocent III. the approbation of his Rule, his request met with considerable opposition from the Pontiff himself, and from the College of Cardinals, on account of the rigid poverty which was prescribed for the new institute; but at length the Vicar of Christ yielded to the entreaties of the holy Patriarch, exclaiming: "Verily this is he who is called to support and repair the Church of God." Then he went on to explain how, some time previously, when he had fallen asleep, his mind full of anxiety about the troubled state of the Church, he had beheld in a dream the Lateran Basilica about to fall to the ground, but supported on the shoulders of a beggar, whom he recognised in the humble suppliant now kneeling at his feet. Five years later, when the Patriarch of the Friars Preachers presented himself before the same Pontiff, asking permission to found his Order, the difficulties which stood in the way, owing to the recent decrees of the Council of Lateran, forbidding the establishment of any new religious institutes, were removed by a precisely similar vision, wherein the Pope saw the tottering Basilica supported this time on the shoulders of Saint Dominic.

It was probably on occasion of this visit of our holy Father to Rome, in the autumn of the year 1215, that the twin Saints first met. One night Saint Dominic was praying in Saint Peter's when he saw the figure of our Lord in the air above his head, holding in His hand three darts, with which He seemed to be about to strike the world in punishment for its exceeding wickedness. Then our Blessed Lady prostrated before her Divine Son, and presented to him two men, whose zeal, she said, should convert sinners and

Oct. 4 appease His irritated justice. In one of these men the Saint recognised himself; the other was totally unknown to him. Going the next day into a church to pray, he beheld the stranger of his vision clad in the garb of a beggar. It was Saint Francis of Assisi; and, recognising him as his destined companion and brother in the work to which both were divinely called, he embraced him with tears, exclaiming: "You are my comrade; you will go with me; let us keep together, and nothing shall be able to prevail against us." This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship; from that day the two Saints had but one heart and one soul in God. Saint Angelus the Carmelite, who afterwards suffered martyrdom, was also in Rome at this time, and is said to have preached in Saint John Lateran's in presence of both holy Founders, predicting their future greatness and the extension of their Orders. Other meetings between the two holy Patriarchs are recorded, especially one which took place at Cremona, A.D. 1220, when a graceful contest arose between them as to which of them should bless the water of a well which had become unfit for use. Franciscan authors represent the two Saints as blessing the waters together; whereas, according to the Dominican chronicles, the humility of Saint Francis won the day, and the miracle of restoring the water to its clearness and sweet savour was wrought by the blessing of Saint Dominic.

The close friendship of the two holy Founders was handed down by them as a sacred bequest to their children, and was considered of sufficient importance to be made a matter of legislation. Hence the General Chapter of Paris, A.D. 1236, passed the following ordinance, which was renewed in subsequent Chapters, and still finds its place in the Constitutions of the Friars Preachers: "We declare that all our Priors and Brethren should have a diligent care that they

always and everywhere bear and heartily preserve a **Oct. 4**
great love for the Friars Minor; let them praise them
with their lips, and by their works kindly receive and
courteously treat them; and be solicitous, as far as
they can, to be at peace with them." It has likewise
been ordained that a commemoration should be made
of Saint Francis whenever the Office of Saint Dominic
is said on a Tuesday; and, by permission of the Holy
See, the proper Office of both holy Patriarchs is recited
by both Orders on their respective feasts. It is, more-
over, the custom for the Master-General of the Order
of Preachers to sing the High Mass in the great
Franciscan Church of Ara Cœli in Rome on the festival
of Saint Francis, whilst the Minister-General of the
Friars Minor officiates in the Dominican Church of
Santa Maria sopra Minerva on the feast of our holy
Father, Saint Dominic. Wherever it is possible, this
practice is imitated in other convents of both Orders,
that thus the Brethren may ever be more and more
closely knit together in the bonds of charity.

Prayer

O God, who through the merits of our Blessed
Father, Saint Francis, didst give increase to Thy
Church by a new offspring, grant that, after his
example, we may despise earthly things and ever enjoy
a share of heavenly gifts. Through Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.

OCTOBER 5

Blessed Raymund of Capua, Confessor

(A.D. 1330-1399)

Oct. 5 BLESSED RAYMUND was born at Capua about A.D. 1330, of the noble family Delle Vigne. Sent to study at the University of Bologna, he was miraculously called by Saint Dominic himself to take the habit of his Order, and soon became conspicuous amongst his Brethren for his learning, as well as for his humility, modesty, and exact observance of the Rule. The extreme delicacy of his health, however, which continued to be a constant source of suffering during his whole life, prevented him from keeping the prescribed fasts, and at length he was obliged to yield to the unanimous advice of both his physicians and spiritual directors, and relinquish the attempt. Nevertheless, Our Lady, to whom he ever bore the most tender devotion, obtained for him the grace of being able to fast on bread and water on the eves of her feasts.

Whilst still comparatively young, he was entrusted with the spiritual direction of some monasteries of religious women, and in particular with that of Saint Agnes of Monte Pulciano. During his residence there he wrote the Life of that Saint. In the year 1367 he became Prior of the great Convent of the Minerva in Rome, and in 1374 was sent as Lector to the Convent of Saint Dominic at Siena, where he first became acquainted with her, whom, in spite of her youth, he soon learnt to call his Mother, and with whose name his own will ever be indissolubly linked. As Saint Catharine of Siena was assisting at Father Raymund's Mass on the Feast of Saint John the

Baptist, she heard a voice, saying : " This is My Oct. 5
beloved servant ; this is he to whom I will give thee,"
and she understood that he was the Confessor whom
our Blessed Lady had promised her several years
previously, and who was to give her more help than
any she had yet consulted. From that day she
placed the direction of her conscience in his hands.

The plague was at this time raging at Siena, and
Blessed Raymund devoted himself day and night to
the service of the plague-stricken. He caught the
infection, but was miraculously cured by his saintly
penitent. The extraordinary graces granted to Saint
Catharine at first caused considerable anxiety to her
Confessor, who feared that she might be deluded by
the devil. He therefore sought to put her to the
proof by some infallible test, and desired her to ob-
tain for him such perfect contrition for his sins as
he had never before experienced. His petition was
granted in a remarkable manner ; and on another
occasion his doubts were assuaged by seeing the
face of his holy penitent suddenly transformed into
that of our Lord. He was present when the Saint
received the stigmata at Pisa, accompanied her in
her visit to the Pontifical Court at Avignon, and was
one of the Confessors who went about with her on
her missions of peace and reconciliation, and who
were often employed from dawn till nightfall in hear-
ing the confessions of those whom her burning words
had moved to repentance.

In conjunction with Saint Catharine, Blessed Ray-
mund took an active part in procuring the return of
Gregory XI. to Rome, whither he was soon called
upon to follow him. Whilst there, he was again
elected Prior of the Minerva. In the year 1378
the Pope died, and shortly after the election of
his successor began that miserable Schism of the

Oct. 5 West, which was to be for full forty years the bane and scandal of Christendom. The lawfully elected Pontiff, Urban VI., sent Blessed Raymund to France, in the hope of detaching King Charles V. from the cause of the Schism. Prevented from entering that country by the machinations of Queen Joanna of Naples, he began, in conformity with further instructions received from the Pope, to preach the crusade against the schismatics at Genoa; and it was there, on April 29, A.D. 1380, that he received a miraculous intimation of the death of his seraphic penitent, Saint Catharine, who expired in Rome on that day.

A few weeks later, at the General Chapter at Bologna, Blessed Raymund was elected General of that portion of the Order which was under the obedience of the lawful Pontiff. Never was General called upon to take up the burden of superiority in darker days. The great Schism had divided the Order as well as the Church, and the Friars of Spain, France, Scotland, and the two Sicilies, with their General, Elias of Toulouse, were, like the faithful in those countries, under the obedience of the Antipope. In addition to this, the terrible pestilence called the Black Death, which desolated Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century, had caused a great and universal relaxation of discipline, and the remainder of Blessed Raymund's life was devoted to the hard task of reform. Assisted by the devoted disciples of Saint Catharine of Siena, Father Thomas Caffarini and Father Bartholomew Dominici, and a number of other saintly Friars, some of whom, like the Blessed John Dominici, have been raised to the altars of the Church, he succeeded in founding a large number of Convents of strict observance, and earned for himself the title of "Second Founder" of the Order, which he governed with the utmost prudence,

tact, and charity, for nineteen years. Besides the Oct. 5
arduous labours imposed on him by his office, he was constantly employed by the Popes in important and difficult negotiations. He also found time to write the Life of his seraphic penitent, Saint Catharine of Siena. His devotion to Our Lady showed itself by ordaining the more frequent use of the verse *Maria Mater gratiæ* in the Divine Office.

Worn out by his labours for the Church and the Order, Blessed Raymund made a holy and happy end at Nüremberg, in Bavaria, on the 5th of October, A.D. 1399. His holy remains were subsequently removed to the Church of Saint Dominic at Naples. Held in the utmost veneration from the time of his death, he was beatified by Leo XIII. A.D. 1899.

Prayer

O God, who wouldst have Blessed Raymund, Thy Confessor, to be a distinguished master of evangelical perfection and a faithful supporter of the Apostolic authority, graciously grant, that, living after his example on earth, we may deserve to be crowned with him in heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

OCTOBER 7

Blessed Matthew Carrerii, Confessor

(A.D. 1470)

BLESSED MATTHEW, who received in baptism the Oct. 7
name of John Francis, was born of pious and noble parents at Mantua. In his childhood and youth he manifested a tender love for the poor, and, from a desire to practise humility, loved to take upon himself the work of the servants in his father's house. Entering the Dominican Order whilst still very young, he

Oct. 7 practised such extreme austerity during his noviciate that his Superiors found themselves compelled to restrain his fervour, and, in obedience to their commands, he somewhat moderated the rigour of his penitential exercises. Nevertheless his whole life was one of severe penance. He was a great lover of silence and solitude, and, like his holy Father, Saint Dominic, never spoke save of God or to God. He had the greatest horror of vainglory, which he was wont to call "the subtle vice" which robs us of the merit of our good works unawares. So great was his fervour in the recitation of the Divine Office, that he often seemed to be rapt out of himself when engaged in that duty. He prepared himself by assiduous prayer for the work of apostolic preaching, in which he was employed during his whole life, and his ardent zeal for souls drew even the most hardened sinners to repentance.

Going once by water from Genoa to Pisa, the ship in which he sailed was taken by pirates. The captain of the pirates was so struck with the expression of devotion that beamed on the countenance of his saintly prisoner that he commanded him to be instantly set at liberty. But Blessed Matthew, perceiving amongst the captives a young girl and her mother, and fearing that some evil might befall them, threw himself at the ruffian's feet, conjuring him to liberate them and to let him remain in captivity in their place. The heroism of the act so touched the pirate's heart that he granted freedom to all three.

Blessed Matthew directed his attention to the reformation of his Order, and by his eloquence and wonderful powers of persuasion induced a large number of Convents to return to the strict observance of the Rule.

He was very devout to the Passion, and was accustomed daily to spend several hours in contemplation of

that Divine mystery, earnestly begging that, before his death, he might be permitted to suffer something of the anguish which his Divine Master had endured upon the Cross. One day, as he lay sick, absorbed in his customary prayer, our Lord appeared to him, and at the same moment he felt his heart pierced with a terrible and supernatural pain. Then he knew that his petition was granted and that his death was at hand. He received the last Sacraments with the utmost devotion, making a beautiful discourse on the Real Presence before receiving Holy Viaticum, and another after Extreme Unction. He promised the Prior of the Convent of Vigevano, where he died, that he would always take special care of that house, where regular observance is said never to have failed. Then, having placed the last act of his life under the safeguard of obedience by asking and obtaining his Superior's permission to die, he happily departed to our Lord on the 5th of October, A.D. 1470. It was confidently believed that he had never lost his baptismal innocence. Immediately after his death he began to work many miracles and was held in great veneration. He had promised Blessed Stephana of Soncino, when she was only a child, that he would make her his heiress. At the time she had not understood the meaning of his words, but after his death her heart was transfixed with the same mysterious pain which had been so heroically borne by Blessed Matthew. He was beatified by Benedict XIV.

Oct. 7

Prayer

Excite within our hearts, O Lord, the love of Thy Cross and Passion, that, by the intercession and example of Blessed Matthew, we may be partakers both of Thy sufferings and of Thy glory, who livest and reignest, &c. Amen.

OCTOBER 10

Saint Lewis Bertrand, Confessor

(A.D. 1526-1581)

Oct. 10 SAINT LEWIS BERTRAND was one of the many great Saints which Catholic Spain gave to the Church in the sixteenth century. He was born at Valencia of holy parents, who were in a good position in life and near akin to the family of Saint Vincent Ferrer. On the very day of his birth, January 1, A.D. 1526, he received the Sacrament of regeneration at the same font in which Saint Vincent had been baptized a century and a half previously. Before he was eight years old he began daily to recite the Office of Our Lady, and at an early age he obtained permission to visit and nurse the sick in the hospitals. To conceal his frequent Communion from the knowledge of others, he was accustomed to receive in different churches. When still quite a boy, he fled secretly from his home, intending to spend his life as a poor pilgrim, but he was overtaken and brought back.

Lewis now conceived an ardent desire to enter the Order of Saint Dominic, but his father, who could not bear to part with him, raised many obstacles in the way of his following out his vocation; and it was not until he was nearly nineteen that he was clothed in the white habit he had so long coveted. He made his solemn vows on the 27th of August, A.D. 1545, and two years later was raised to the priesthood, before he had attained the age of twenty-two. The fervour which he felt in singing his first Mass never relaxed during his whole life; he was always distinguished for his intense devotion to the Adorable Sacrament, and he

became one of the many Saints who were instrumental in God's hands in restoring the ancient practice of frequent communion. Oct. 10

Four years after his ordination he was appointed Master of Novices. In accepting this post, the rule he made for himself and faithfully carried out was to be the first in every duty and a living example to those under his charge of all the virtues which he desired to form in them. His discipline was indeed somewhat severe, but his novices were well aware that their holy master chastised his own body with penances tenfold harder than any which he imposed upon them. He was full of sympathy for them in all their trials and temptations, and trained so great a number in the religious life, that his holy Franciscan friend, Blessed Nicholas Factor, used to compare him to Blessed Jordan of Saxony, who is said to have clothed more than a thousand novices with his own hand.

Saint Lewis had the consolation of assisting his father in his last hours. During the eight years which followed, he prayed and suffered incessantly for the release of that beloved soul from Purgatory, and at length was comforted by beholding it in glory.

The Community of Valencia having been compelled to disperse for a time on account of the ravages of the plague, Saint Lewis became Superior of the small Convent of Saint Anne at Albayda, where he distinguished himself by his great charity to the poor and his bold denunciation of public scandals from the pulpit. This apostolic liberty of speech nearly cost him his life, for a gentleman of high rank was so incensed by one of his sermons, which he believed to be pointed at his own flagrant wickedness, as to attempt to shoot him; but the Saint quietly made the sign of the Cross, and the gun levelled against him was miraculously changed into a crucifix.

Oct. 10 In the year 1562, Saint Lewis, whose daily prayer at the elevation in the Mass was: "Grant, O Lord, that I may die for Thee, who didst deign to die for me," set sail for South America, where he laboured as a missionary amongst the Indians for seven years, gathering many thousands into the fold of Christ, and earning for himself the title of the Apostle of New Granada. He preached on the Isthmus of Panama and in the north-western part of South America, even penetrating alone among the savage tribes of the Caribs, who inhabited some of the West Indian Islands, and who had hitherto been regarded as irreclaimable. They listened, however, to the voice of the Saint, and great numbers were converted. One of the idolatrous priests, enraged at Saint Lewis's success, administered to him virulent poison, which nearly caused his death, and from the effects of which he continued to suffer to the end of his life. God favoured him with the gift of tongues in a double way. Sometimes, speaking in his native Castilian, he was understood by his hearers as if he had been using their language; at other times he employed languages of which he himself was naturally ignorant. His preaching was also confirmed by many miracles.

In the year 1569, Saint Lewis, distressed by the cruelties practised on the Indians by their Spanish conquerors, returned to Spain, where, after governing for three years the Convent of Saint Onuphrius and discharging for a time his old office of novice-master, he was elected Prior of his own Convent in Valencia. As Superior, he gave his Community a wonderful example of every religious virtue, always doing more himself than he required of others.

Saint Lewis Bertrand united to a tender love for his Divine Master an eminent degree of the gift of holy fear; not that servile fear which springs from self-love,

but a reverential fear lest his own sinfulness should render him unworthy of the eternal possession of God. He was also distinguished for his great love of the Rosary, and he often made use of his Rosary and the intercession of Our Lady to veil the miraculous powers with which God had endowed him. Thus it was by the application of his Rosary that he raised a girl to life in South America. Oct. 10

His last illness was long and painful. At length, on October 9, A.D. 1581, his blessed soul was released from the prison of the body, his passage out of this world being marked by many prodigies. He was beatified by Paul V., A.D. 1608, and canonized by Clement X., A.D. 1671. At the beginning of the present century his holy body was still incorrupt.

Prayer

O God, who, through mortification of the body and the preaching of the faith, didst raise the Blessed Lewis, Thy Confessor, to the glory of the Saints, grant that what we profess by faith we may ever fulfil by works of holiness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

OCTOBER 12

Blessed James of Ulm, Lay Brother, Confessor

(A.D. 1407-1491)

BLESSED JAMES was born of pious and respectable parents at Ulm in Germany, A.D. 1407. Having spent his youth blamelessly, he left his home at the age of twenty-five to go on pilgrimage to Rome, where he visited the holy places with great devotion. Pass- Oct. 12

Oct. 12 ing thence into the kingdom of Naples, he embraced the career of arms ; but, horrified at the licentiousness of his fellow-soldiers, which he vainly strove to repress, he soon quitted the army and entered the service of a nobleman at Capua. His fidelity and diligence so endeared him to his master, that he was intrusted with the entire management of the property ; and when, at the end of five years, he solicited permission to depart, being desirous to see his parents once more, the desired leave was peremptorily refused. Blessed James, therefore, having wound up his master's affairs and left everything in perfect order, set out secretly for Rome, whence he passed on to Bologna. Here he was again induced to enlist in a company of soldiers ; but, as there was no war going on in those parts just then, he spent his leisure time in satisfying his devotion in various churches of the city, but specially in that of Saint Dominic, to which he felt himself irresistibly attracted. It seemed as if he were ever seeking his true vocation, which as yet he had not found.

At length he felt himself inspired to enter the Dominican Order ; and, having obtained leave from his captain for the step he was about to take, he betook himself one morning to the Church of the Friars, earnestly begging of God that he might meet with one of the Fathers who would counsel him in this important matter. It so chanced that the first religious who came into the church was the Prior, a holy and learned man. The young soldier cast himself at his feet and begged his advice and assistance. Struck by the devout aspect of the postulant, the Prior willingly promised to procure his admission to the noviciate ; and he accordingly received the habit, choosing out of humility the lowly condition of lay brother, although his education was sufficiently good to have entitled him to the higher position of a Choir-Religious.

During his time of probation, Blessed James made **Oct. 12** it his special study to ground himself in the virtue of humility, on which he founded the whole edifice of his perfection. He sincerely believed himself to be the worst of men ; and before being admitted to profession he cast himself at the feet of each of the religious, imploring them with tears in his eyes to show him mercy and not to send him away by reason of his unworthiness. After he had made his vows, he set himself to keep them with the utmost fidelity. He punctually observed the Rule and Constitutions, practised severe penance, and avoided idleness as the mortal enemy of the soul.

But the virtue which shone forth most resplendently in this humble servant of God was that of obedience ; and his life furnishes several examples of the heroism to which he carried this essential religious virtue. The Prior, wishing to manifest the readiness of the holy man's obedience to a prelate who happened to visit the Convent, called him to him, and putting a letter into his hand, desired him to carry it without delay to Paris. The journey at that time was one of several weeks and beset with dangers. Blessed James, however, without expressing a single want or waiting for any provision for the way, prepared instantly to depart, saying only, "May I first go to our cell to get our hat and stick?" On another occasion the holy lay brother, who was a skilful painter on glass, had just completed a beautiful figure on a stained glass window, and had placed it in the furnace to fix the colours. As he was anxiously watching the process and regulating the heat of the furnace, he was suddenly ordered to go out and beg bread for the Community. Without a moment's hesitation, he took his wallet and obeyed. Returning after some hours, and expecting to find his glass not only spoilt but even reduced to ashes,

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Oct. 12 he discovered, on opening the furnace, that God had worked a miracle to reward his obedience. The painting was in perfect preservation, with the colours better fixed than they had ever been on former occasions, when he had himself been there to superintend the work.

A beautiful picture is left us of the daily life of Blessed James. He was always the first to come down to Matins, and, after assisting at that office, he spent long hours prostrate in prayer before the Adorable Sacrament. At daybreak he said his office of *Pater nosters*, as prescribed for lay brothers, up to Vespers, paid a visit to the altars, reciting some special prayer at each, saluted our Blessed Lady, to whom he bore a tender devotion, with the Antiphon "*Ave Regina cælorum*," served two Masses, and then betook himself to his glass-painting or to the domestic work of the Convent. Whilst he worked, he never ceased to pray. Hence he was a strict observer of silence, never speaking save when necessity or charity required that he should do so. His favourite subject of contemplation was the Passion of his Divine Master. He was assiduous also in the use of vocal prayers, having a special devotion to the verse :—

"O Jesu, born of Virgin bright,
Immortal glory be to Thee."

To which he would add, "Help me this day, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen." His prayer was accompanied by raptures; and his countenance, whilst engaged in this holy exercise, emitted brilliant rays of light. He was often cruelly ill-treated by the evil spirits, and comforted by his Guardian Angel. His miracles were very numerous.

Blessed James, having preserved his baptismal inno-

cence unsullied, happily departed to our Lord, A.D. Oct. 12 1491. He was beatified by Leo. XII.

Prayer

O God, who didst wonderfully adorn Blessed James, Thy Confessor, with the virtues of humility and obedience, make us, through his intercession, to despise earthly things and evermore cleave to Thy commandments. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

OCTOBER 14

Blessed Magdalen Pannatieri, Virgin

(A.D. 1443-1503)

BLESSED MAGDALEN PANNATIERI was born at a Oct. 14 village called Trino, in the Marquisate of Montferrat, in the North of Italy, about A.D. 1443. She was richly gifted both by nature and grace, and received an excellent education. Whilst still a child, she chose Jesus Christ for her Spouse, and bound herself to Him by a vow of perpetual virginity, strenuously endeavouring to keep her heart detached from all earthly things. Desiring to consecrate herself yet more entirely to the Beloved of her soul, she took the habit of the Third Order whilst still very young and strove to make her life resemble those of Saint Dominic and Saint Catharine of Siena. She practised severe fasts throughout the entire year, disciplined herself to blood every night, wore a rough hair-shirt, and took her scanty rest on the bare ground, spending the greater part of her time in fervent prayer.

She was favoured with frequent raptures and apparitions; on every festival she was granted a vision of the mystery or of the Saint honoured by the Church on that day. This was particularly the case in Holy

Oct. 14 Week, when she was admitted to a mysterious and visible participation in the sufferings of her Divine Spouse, and in Easter Week, when her countenance appeared radiant with celestial light. Our Blessed Lady often manifested herself to her, and laid the Divine Child in her arms. She was frequently visited by the Holy Apostles, Saints Peter and Paul, to whom she had a special devotion. Many times she was taken in spirit to the holy places of Palestine, of which she was able to give a minute and accurate description. She assured her Confessor that she had never asked anything of our Lord or of His Blessed Mother which had not been granted to her, either wholly or in part, according to the fervour of her supplication. God bestowed on her the gift of miracles and of prophecy, and made known to her the terrible calamities which were threatening her native country in the wars between the French King, Francis I., and the Emperor Charles V., who made Northern Italy their battleground. By her fervent supplications she succeeded in averting the Divine wrath from her own village of Trino.

The heroic sanctity of Blessed Magdalen and the ardent zeal with which, as a true daughter of Saint Dominic, she devoted herself to procuring the salvation of souls, made her a special object of hatred to the devil, who was permitted to assail her with many and grievous temptations, and even to appear to her, scourging and tormenting her in a horrible manner. But her courage in the midst of these infernal attacks was undaunted. Blessed Magdalen had a very special devotion to the Most Holy Name of Jesus. The Passion of her Divine Spouse was the frequent subject of her contemplation, and she longed to undergo pain and humiliation for Him who had suffered so much and been so deeply humbled for her.

After spending the whole morning in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Blessed Magdalen was accustomed daily to visit all the sick in the village, ministering to their spiritual and temporal needs with the utmost charity. She loved to serve her Divine Spouse in the person of His poor. She would entertain them at her table, even when they were suffering from the most loathsome diseases, serving them herself, and making her own meal on the leavings of their repast. She had a wonderful gift of influencing others, and spoke with such sweetness and efficacy that people were never weary of listening to her holy exhortations.

When she knew that the end of her earthly pilgrimage was at hand, she summoned all the Sisters of the Third Order around her, humbly begged their pardon for any offence or bad example she might have given them, earnestly exhorted them to mutual charity and the observance of their Rule, and bade them an affectionate farewell, promising to be mindful of them in the presence of their Heavenly Spouse, whom she hoped shortly to behold face to face. When the news of her illness spread abroad, people came in crowds from all the surrounding country, anxious to see and speak to her once more and to commend themselves to her prayers. She welcomed them all with tender charity and gave them wise and holy counsels.

Suddenly the servant of God, fixing her eyes on one corner of the chamber in which she lay, bade the bystanders make room for heavenly visitors. She then seemed to be rapt in ecstasy, her countenance radiant with joy. Those who knelt around could see nothing, but were conscious of a celestial fragrance which perfumed the air. When Blessed Magdalen came to herself, she told her Confessor that our Lord and His Blessed Mother had been to visit her, accompanied by Saint Catharine the Martyr and several

Oct. 14

- Oct. 14** Saints of the Order. She then made her general confession and received the Last Sacraments with the deepest sentiments of contrition and devotion ; after which she sweetly intoned the hymns *Jesu nostra redemptio* and *Ave maris Stella*, which she sang throughout in company with those who were assisting at this holy and happy deathbed, as also the psalm : " In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped," as far as the words : " Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." The same celestial fragrance again perfumed the air, announcing that our Lord had fulfilled the promise made to His servant that He would come again with His Blessed Mother and the Saints and take her to Himself ; and Blessed Magdalen calmly breathed forth her soul to Him. It was the 13th of October, A.D. 1503. Her death was followed by many miracles, and she was beatified by Leo XII.

Prayer

O God, who forsakest no man that trusteth in Thee, and mercifully hearest him that meekly beseecheth Thee, grant, we pray Thee, that what we cannot obtain by our own merits, we may receive through the patronage of Thy Blessed Virgin, Magdalen. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

OCTOBER 22

Blessed Peter of Tiferno, Confessor

(A.D. 1390-1445)

- Oct. 22** BLESSED PETER belonged to the noble family of the Cappucci, and was born at Tiferno, now called Città di Castello, in Italy, A.D. 1390. At the age of fifteen he received the habit of Saint Dominic in the

Convent of his native place. After his profession Oct 22 he was sent to Cortona, where he was ordained priest and remained until his death. At Cortona he had the happiness of being trained in the religious life by that great luminary of the Order, Blessed Laurence of Ripafratta. This enlightened spiritual guide, with his accustomed discernment, bade his new disciple devote himself chiefly to contemplation. Blessed Peter had for his companions Saint Antoninus, who afterwards became Archbishop of Florence, and many other illustrious men granted to the Order at that time to restore regular observance after the disastrous relaxation of discipline caused by the Black Death and the great Schism of the West.

Blessed Peter was a great lover of humility and poverty; and though of noble birth, delighted in going round the city with a wallet upon his back, begging alms from door to door for the support of the Community. On one occasion, when he had gone after the vintage to beg some wine from a rich nobleman, the latter excused himself on the plea that he had already disposed of all his wine. The holy man pressed his suit, however, assuring the nobleman that, if he would only look, he would find there was plenty of wine left to bestow in alms. They accordingly went together to a large cask which had been empty and dry a few minutes previously, and found it miraculously filled to the brim with excellent wine.

A poor woman who was hindered from earning her livelihood by reason of a withered hand, once implored the holy man to touch and heal it. Moved with compassion, he made the sign of the cross over it from a distance, and it was instantly restored to soundness.

As a true son of Saint Dominic, Blessed Peter

Oct. 22 was filled with burning zeal for the conversion of souls, and doubtless wrought many conversions by his public preaching and private exhortations. Unfortunately a fire which consumed the archives of the Convent of Cortona, and the frequent wars and sackings of the city, have deprived us of almost all particulars of the life of this great servant of God. The following story has, however, been preserved. As Blessed Peter was one day walking in the cloister of his Convent, he met a young man of dissolute life, who even at that very moment was planning a crime which he intended to commit on the morrow. The holy man fixed his eyes steadfastly upon him and exclaimed: "What evil art thou turning over in thy mind? How long wilt thou go on adding sin to sin? Know that thou hast but twenty-four hours more to live, and that this time to-morrow thou wilt have to give an account to God of thy iniquities." The youth turned pale at these terrible words, knowing well that Blessed Peter possessed the spirit of prophecy; nevertheless his bad habits gained the mastery and he returned home unconverted. The man of God, however, followed him with his prayers, and they were not offered in vain. That night the miserable youth met with a terrible accident; and seeing that Blessed Peter's prophecy was about to be fulfilled, he sent for him, made his confession to him with every sign of true contrition, and thus passed out of this world penitent and absolved.

Two young men who had been unjustly condemned were miraculously delivered from death by the servant of God, but the particulars of this interesting event have not been preserved.

The death of Blessed Peter took place in the year 1445, on the Feast of Saint Ursula and the eleven

thousand virgin companions of her martyrdom, to whom he bore a singular devotion. On his deathbed he promised ever to watch over the religious of his Order and the city of Cortona. Many miracles were worked at his tomb, and he was beatified by Pius VII. In his picture Blessed Peter is represented holding a skull, in allusion to his custom of meditating and preaching with this emblem of death in his hand. Oct. 22

Prayer

O God, who hast declared that Thy faithful, by continually remembering their latter end, shall never sin, grant, through the prayers and example of Blessed Peter, Thy Confessor, that we may so bear in mind our temporal death, that, by continually weeping over the sins we have committed, we may avoid eternal death. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

OCTOBER 23

Blessed Bartholomew Breganza, Bishop and Confessor

(A.D. 1271)

BLESSED BARTHOLOMEW was a native of Vicenza in Northern Italy, and belonged to the noble family of Breganza. He received the habit of the Order from Saint Dominic's own hands on occasion of the holy Patriarch's visit to Vicenza about A.D. 1220. So eminent was his virtue, that, only a few months after his reception, he became Prior, and he successfully governed several Convents with great prudence and fruit of souls. Seven years later he became Master of the Sacred Palace, an office which had been first held Oct. 23

Oct. 23 by Saint Dominic himself, and which has since been hereditary in the Order. It was whilst discharging these functions that Blessed Bartholomew composed his learned commentary on the work of Saint Denis: "*De celesti hierarchia*."

Bologna was at this time a prey to terrible civil dissensions, and the anger of God against the guilty city had been manifested by a plague of caterpillars and locusts, which had laid waste all the adjacent territory. Under these circumstances, Father John of Vicenza of our Order, who, though never solemnly beatified, is nevertheless popularly known by the title of Blessed John of Vicenza, in company with Blessed Bartholomew, went to exercise his apostolic ministry in a city so dear to all the sons of Saint Dominic, as being the burial-place of their holy Founder. The labours of the two saintly Dominicans bore abundant fruit; and, to ensure the continuance of the peace thus happily restored, Blessed Bartholomew established an Order of Knights, whose special office it should be to act as peacemakers. This Order spread widely throughout Italy, and received the approbation of the Holy See.

In the year 1246, Pope Innocent IV. appointed Blessed Bartholomew to a Bishopric in the Island of Cyprus, which he governed for two years, after which he was sent as Papal Legate to Saint Lewis of France, who was then carrying on the Crusade against the infidels. The two Saints contracted a sweet and holy friendship, Saint Lewis making choice of Blessed Bartholomew as his Confessor. When the King returned to France in A.D. 1252, Blessed Bartholomew went back to his diocese, which he continued to govern until A.D. 1256, when Pope Alexander IV. translated him to the Episcopal See of his native city of Vicenza.

The Bishop's first care was to purge his new diocese

from the pestilential errors which had crept into it, and to his great joy he succeeded in converting the leader of the heretical party and a large number of his followers. This so exasperated the infamous Ezzelino, who at that time tyrannized over Northern Italy in the name of the German Emperor, that he procured the banishment of Blessed Bartholomew. The holy man was then sent by the Sovereign Pontiff as Nuncio to negotiate certain important affairs with the King of England. He returned from that country in company with Henry III. and his Queen, who were crossing over to Normandy. On his way back to Italy, Blessed Bartholomew had the consolation of visiting his beloved friend, Saint Lewis, who fulfilled the promise he had formerly made to him when they were in Palestine together, by bestowing upon him a relic of the True Cross and one of the thorns of our Lord's crown, which had been given to him by the Emperor of Constantinople, and for the reception of which he had erected the Sainte Chapelle in Paris.

In the year 1259, the death of Ezzelino left Blessed Bartholomew free to return to his diocese, bringing with him the priceless relics with which his saintly penitent had gifted him, and an authentication of the same in the King's own handwriting. As the holy Bishop drew nigh to Vicenza, the people went out to meet him with every demonstration of joy, exclaiming: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" He proceeded to build a large church to receive the precious relics he had brought with him, and attached to it a Convent, which he bestowed on his own Brethren, whose quarters in Vicenza had hitherto been miserably poor and incommodious.

A noble Venetian widow, who had in her possession a rich and beautiful reliquary, which had been bestowed on her husband by the Greek Emperor and which

Oct. 23

Oct. 23 contained a portion of the True Cross, two thorns of our Lord's crown, and relics of the Apostles and other Saints, sent for Blessed Bartholomew to come to Venice, that she might consign her treasure to him, to be deposited in his newly-erected Church of the Holy Crown. The servant of God joyfully obeyed the summons, and enriched his beloved sanctuary with these priceless gifts.

Blessed Bartholomew devoted himself with the utmost zeal and fervour to the labours of his office, rooting out heresy, pacifying those who were at variance, relieving the wants of the poor, and rebuilding his Cathedral, which had been destroyed by Ezze-lino. So greatly was he valued and beloved by his flock, that they implored him to accept the temporal sovereignty of the city. This, however, he resolutely refused to do; but by his prudent counsels he greatly promoted the peace and prosperity both of Church and State. He was continually chosen as a mediator in the struggles and disputes which then distracted Northern Italy, and his wonderful powers of conciliation did much to remedy the miserable feuds of the times.

The holy man had the happiness of assisting in the year 1267 at the second translation of the relics of our Holy Father, Saint Dominic, of which he has left an official account. He it was who pronounced the panegyric on the occasion. His happy death took place A.D. 1271, and he was laid to rest in his beloved Church of the Holy Crown. He was beatified by Pius VI.

Prayer

O God, who madest Blessed Bartholomew, Thy Confessor and Bishop, wonderful in leading the enemies of the faith from the darkness of error to the

light of truth, and in bringing back multitudes to peace and concord, grant, through his intercession, that Thy peace, which passeth all understanding, may keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee for ever and ever. Amen. Oct. 23

OCTOBER 26

Blessed Damian Furcherio, Confessor

(A.D. 1484)

BLESSED DAMIAN was born of rich and noble parents at the village of Finario, not far from Genoa. Oct. 26 When quite a little child, he was carried off by a lunatic, and after long search was finally recovered by a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence. He spent his youth piously, and, wishing to escape the snares and temptations of the world, early entered the Dominican Order, in which he made rapid progress both in sacred science and holiness of life. Looking upon the religious state as a school of perfection, he laid the foundation of his spiritual life in profound humility; he strove to bring the flesh into subjection by fasting and abstinence, and devoted much time to prayer. He gave himself with the utmost ardour to sacred studies and wrote some very devout spiritual treatises.

If he strove so earnestly to acquire learning, it was with the pure intention of qualifying himself to spread the faith and promote the glory of God; and, when obedience called him to labour for souls throughout the length and breadth of Italy, it was clearly seen that the Divine blessing had rested on his studies; for the fruits of Blessed Damian's preaching were considered wonderful even in that age of great preachers. The fire of his eloquence was irresistible, and as it were

Oct. 26 forced men from sin to repentance. Unfortunately the chronicles which bestow such high eulogiums upon him have preserved few or none of the details of his life. Having attained to an advanced age, he was attacked by his last illness at Reggio, near Modena, and having received the last Sacraments with the utmost devotion, happily departed to our Lord, A.D. 1484. Many miracles having been worked through his intercession, his relics were widely distributed; and he was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, who for the salvation of the faithful didst adorn Blessed Damian, Thy Confessor, with all virtues and a wonderful power of speech, grant, we beseech Thee, that, through his intercession and example, we may show forth true charity both by word and work. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

OCTOBER 29

Blessed Benvenuta Bojani, Virgin

(A.D. 1254-1292)

Oct. 29 BLESSED BENVENUTA was born at Cividale, in the province of Friuli, in the Austrian dominions, about A.D. 1254. The family already consisted of six daughters, and the father earnestly desired a son. Those who were present at the child's birth were, therefore, afraid to tell him that his hopes were again disappointed; but he guessed the truth from their silence, and exclaimed: "She too shall be welcome!" Hence the little one received the beautiful Italian name of Benvenuta (welcome). From her earliest childhood she gave evidence of singular piety. When only seven years

old, she was in the habit of daily reciting a hundred *Paters* and *Aves* in honour of the adorable Trinity and a thousand *Aves* in honour of our Blessed Lady. On Saturdays she doubled her devotions, and on the festival of the Annunciation, which was specially dear to her, she was accustomed to salute her Heavenly Mother with as many as three thousand *Aves*. A married sister, who was tenderly attached to Benvenuta, strove to induce her to wear costly attire and to accompany her to dances and other festivities; but the saintly child would tear the ornaments from her hair, and, wrapping herself in a coarse veil, seek a hiding-place in a wood at the back of the house, whence she could see a church dedicated to our Blessed Lady, which stood on the summit of a neighbouring hill. The grass, which all around grew rank and thick, was here worn away by her continual genuflections and prostrations.

To the constant exercise of prayer she soon learnt to add that of severe bodily austerities. When she was twelve years old she began to wear a hair-shirt and girded herself with a rope, which, as she grew, became buried in the flesh, causing her intense pain. Fearing that, if she disclosed the circumstance to her parents, they would oblige her to submit to a surgical operation, for which she felt extreme repugnance, she had recourse to prayer, and presently beheld the rope lying unbroken on the ground before her. For this reason she is generally represented with a rope in her hand. She chose our Blessed Lady as her Mother and Mistress, and made a vow of virginity in her hands. She also placed herself in a special manner under the patronage of Saint Dominic by entering the Third Order, and she did her best to imitate the penitential life of the holy Patriarch. She spent the greater part of the night in watching; and, when she felt herself

Oct. 29

Oct. 29 overcome by sleep, she would rub her eyes with vinegar, thus rendering it impossible for her to close them. Thrice every night she took a severe discipline with an iron chain; she practised much fasting and abstinence, denied herself the use of wine, and took her scanty rest lying on the bare ground, with a stone for her pillow. By these austerities, for which in her fervour and simplicity she had not deemed it necessary to ask the permission of her Confessor, she reduced herself to a state of extreme weakness and suffering. Then Saint Dominic appeared to her and bade her manifest all her penitential practices and their consequences to her spiritual father. Benvenuta felt great repugnance to obey this command, and it was not until it had been thrice repeated with some severity that she at length yielded. Thenceforth she was compelled by obedience somewhat to mitigate the extreme austerity of her life and to undertake no penitential practices without express permission.

Satan early made this holy virgin the object of his malignant attacks both in soul and body. He was constantly appearing to her under various forms; and, finding himself unable to lead her into sin, he strove at least to terrify her and to shake her confidence in God; but Benvenuta, whose courage in all these encounters was heroic, so humbled the proud spirit as to compel him to confess that he should be ashamed to appear before his companions after being thus reviled and baffled by a girl. These temptations and struggles, joined to her fasts and vigils and her continual prostrations and prayers, so exhausted her strength, that at last she fell ill and continued in a state of very great suffering for five years, unable to retain any food and living on nothing but water. At length, having made a vow to go on pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Dominic at Bologna

if her health were restored, she was miraculously cured. Oct. 29

Many souls were delivered from Purgatory through the prayers and penances of Blessed Benvenuta, and appeared to her to thank her for their release. Amongst these were her own father and brother. The visions and supernatural favours abundantly bestowed on this humble and faithful servant of God were of singular beauty. The following are the only examples which can be quoted in this brief narrative. One day, when she was praying in a church near her house, she beheld a poor child of exquisite beauty, and, calling him to her, she inquired if he could say the Hail Mary. "Can you say it?" asked the child. Benvenuta immediately began to recite it; and, when she came to the words: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb," the child said: "And I am He," and then disappeared. Having once prepared herself with special devotion to celebrate the festival of our Lord's Nativity, as she was praying in the church on Christmas night and begging the Blessed Virgin to allow her to behold the Divine Babe, she suddenly saw a lady bearing an infant in her arms and accompanied by an old man who carried a stick. The lady bade her return home, telling her she would there see what she desired. Benvenuta obeyed; and, when she reached the house, the same vision was again vouchsafed to her, and the Blessed Virgin laid the Divine Infant in her arms and permitted her to caress Him for more than an hour.

Before the death of Blessed Benvenuta, which happened when she was in her thirty-eighth year, Our Lady revealed to her that the devil would appear to her under a most horrible form, striving to tempt her with vain fears; but her Heavenly Mother promised that she would herself hasten to her assistance, as

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Oct. 29 indeed came to pass. The servant of God, after a short but terrible conflict with the evil one, departed this life in great peace and joy on the 30th of October, A.D. 1292. Her sanctity was attested by many miracles, and she was beatified by Clement X.

Prayer

Pour out upon us, O Lord, the grace of penance, prayer, and humility, that, in imitation of the Blessed Virgin Benvenuta, we may be enabled, through mortification of the flesh, to live in the spirit, and by continual meditation on heavenly things and contempt of ourselves, to find rest and glory in Thee, who alone art God. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOVEMBER 3

Blessed Simon Ballachi, Lay Brother, Confessor

(A.D. 1319.)

Nov. 3 THE family of Ballachi held a distinguished rank in the neighbourhood of Rimini in Italy, and two of its members, uncles of Blessed Simon, successively governed that diocese in quality of Bishop. Simon himself had been intended for a military career, and hence was brought up without any knowledge of letters, according to the custom of the times. When he had attained the age of twenty-seven, however, it pleased God to impress him so forcibly with the sense of the vanity of the world and the exclusive importance of Divine things, that he determined to renounce all, saying with the Psalmist: "I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners."

He entered the Dominican Order, making choice, in spite of his noble birth, of the humble position of a lay brother. Nov. 3

It was his special office to take care of the garden ; and, whilst he tended the plants and flowers and laboured to bring them to perfection, each according to its kind, he was no less assiduous in the cultivation of every virtue, seasoning his toil with holy thoughts and devout ejaculations, and striving to form a spiritual garden for our Lord in his own heart. He took upon himself nearly all the work of the other lay brothers, and every week swept the entire Convent with his own hands. When the hard labour which devolved on him shortened his time for prayer and contemplation, he would make up for the loss by curtailing his sleep and spending many hours of the night in devotional exercises.

In spite of all this fatigue, the austerity of his life was truly admirable. He often fasted during the entire Lent on bread and water, and very frequently passed two whole days without food of any kind. He used to discipline himself with an iron chain, and at the thought of the sins of his past life in the world he redoubled the severity of his blows. True son of Saint Dominic, he was accustomed to inflict this penance on himself also for the conversion of sinners. This practice was particularly hateful to the evil spirits, and many were the sharp attacks he had to sustain from their malice. They would surround him whilst he prayed, filling his mouth with dust and filth ; but their fury never disturbed his serenity. He did but intercede the more earnestly for the salvation of souls, whom, in his humble capacity as lay brother, he could only assist by his prayers and penances. His superiors found themselves obliged to mitigate his austerities, which were

Nov. 3 weakening him to such a degree as to render him unable to work. So copious was his gift of tears, that at the age of fifty-seven he became perfectly blind and continued so to the end of his life. He bore this affliction with perfect resignation, and his exterior blindness became the means of quickening his interior sight, so that he was almost continually lost in contemplation of heavenly things.

On one occasion, when the devils had been tormenting him, as above described, an angel came and washed his face and mouth with holy water, at the same time comforting him with the assurance that our Lord was ever at hand to help him in his combats. Once when he was suffering from a violent fever, our Holy Father Saint Dominic and Saint Peter Martyr appeared to him and restored him to health, assuring him of their continual intercession on his behalf before the throne of God.

He bore a tender devotion to the beloved disciple, Saint John, and was accustomed often to go and pray before a picture of the Holy Evangelist which hung in a corner of the church; and on these occasions all who were present were conscious of a delicious fragrance which diffused itself from that spot over the whole building. Saint Catharine, Virgin and Martyr, once cured Blessed Simon of a violent headache by giving him some mysterious food which was exceedingly sweet to the taste. On another occasion the same Saint appeared to him, bringing him a command on the part of our Blessed Lady that the church of a Monastery then being built in Rimini should be dedicated to the Queen of Heaven under the title of *Santa Maria dei Servi*.

In his old age Blessed Simon became so weak as to be obliged to remain constantly in a recumbent posture on a small wooden couch, where he was often seen

surrounded by a brilliant light, whence a voice would **Nov. 3** be heard to issue, saying, "Fear not, Simon, for thou hast found grace with God." At length, having devoutly received the Holy Sacraments, he happily departed to a better life, on the 3rd of November, A.D. 1319. He was renowned for miracles, both alive and dead, and was beatified by Pius VII.

Prayer

O God, who didst adorn Blessed Simon, Thy Confessor, amongst his other virtues, with constant diligence in prayer and a singular prerogative of humility; grant that we may so imitate him, that, despising all the things of this world, we may here seek Thee alone, and hereafter obtain the rewards promised in heaven to the humble. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOVEMBER 5

Blessed Martin Porres, Confessor

(A.D. 1569-1639)

BLESSED MARTIN was a native of South America, **Nov. 5** and was born at Lima, the capital of Peru, A.D. 1569. His father was a Spanish knight of noble birth, but his mother, though she belonged to one of the richest families of Panama, was of the despised coloured race. The child inherited her features and complexion, on which account his father conceived a dislike for him and turned him out of his house. From his tenderest years little Martin was distinguished for his spirit of piety and mortification. At the age of thirteen he already devoted part of the night to prayer and contemplation, gave away to the poor all the money that

Nov. 5 was bestowed upon him, and even deprived himself of his own food and clothing on their behalf. In order to be able to assist them more efficaciously, he studied medicine and surgery. He always exercised his art gratis, and God often rewarded his charity by marvellous and even miraculous cures.

When he was still young, Our Lady herself commanded him to enter the Dominican Order. In obedience to her will, he accordingly begged to be admitted into the Convent of the Holy Rosary in his native city. His birth, his talents, and above all, his reputation for sanctity, made the Fathers anxious to give him the habit of a choir religious, but he steadfastly refused even the lowly position of a lay brother, preferring to serve the Community in the yet humbler capacity of a Tertiary. Indeed, humility was ever his most distinguishing virtue, and he sincerely rejoiced when treated with scorn and contempt. He became the Infirmarian of the Convent, and, in fact, of all the poor of the city; and his charity specially displayed itself when a contagious disease struck down at the same time as many as sixty members of the Community. For months he allowed himself neither sleep nor food, his life being miraculously supported by Almighty God, for the sake of the sick whom he so charitably tended.

It was his duty to distribute daily to the poor the remains of the meals of the Community. When his stock of food was insufficient for the numbers who presented themselves, he would obtain its miraculous multiplication by his faithful and humble prayers, so that he had enough left for the poor who were ashamed to beg, to whom he sent relief by trusty messengers. His charity extended to every sort of human misery. Through the instrumentality of this humble religious, an immense orphanage was established in Lima,

containing several hundred children of both sexes ; Nov. 5
and to this were soon added other buildings to shelter
foundlings, the sick poor, the aged, and penitents.
In order that needy wayfarers might not be tempted
to steal, he caused fruit-trees to be planted along the
public roads to provide them with refreshment.

Even the dumb animals had their share in his
compassionate tenderness, and seemed instinctively
to know that he had constituted himself their physi-
cian and protector. When hurt or half-starved, they
betook themselves to the Convent, where Blessed
Martin always fed and nursed them ; till at length
his hospital for dogs, cats, and other suffering animals
became so full, that he persuaded his sister to give
them accommodation in her house, whither he went
daily to feed them and dress their wounds. God gave
His servant a wonderful power over these dumb
creatures, so that they understood and obeyed him.
He could not bear to see rats and mice destroyed, and
would say : " If these poor little things were daily pro-
vided with food as we are, they would do no mischief."
Then he commanded the creatures to withdraw to a
remote part of the garden, whither he carried a supply
of food for them every day ; and their ravages in the
Convent ceased. Even to the present time Blessed
Martin continues to exercise his miraculous gifts with
regard to the lower creation ; he is constantly and
efficaciously invoked to put a stop to the depredations
of rats, mice, and other animals.

His burning love for his crucified Master, together
with his zeal for souls and deep contrition of heart,
found expression in the severest austerities. Thrice
every night he afflicted his body with a terrible
discipline, the third time receiving this penance at
the hands of some of the Indian slaves attached to
the service of the Convent ; and to prolong the pain

Nov. 5 he would afterwards bathe the torn and wounded flesh with vinegar and salt, offering all these sufferings, after the example of his holy Patriarch, Saint Dominic, for his own sins, for the conversion of sinners, and for the relief of the souls in Purgatory. He fasted almost the whole year round on bread and water, spent the greater part of the night in prayer, and took his scanty rest in the Chapter-Room, on the bier used for the burial of the dead. So rigid was his poverty that he possessed nothing but a rosary and a crucifix; he had not even a change of clothes. His obedience was simply miraculous. He seemed to divine what was required of him; and over and over again Superiors, coming to give him some order, found him already in the act of executing it.

Blessed Martin was united in close and holy friendship with a beatified lay brother of the Order, Blessed John Massias, then resident in the Convent of Saint Mary Magdalen in Lima. Blessed Martin's happy death took place on the 5th of November, A.D. 1639. His miracles, both during life and after death, were very numerous; he possessed in an eminent degree the gift of prophecy; he is known to have been frequently present at the same time in two places far remote from each other. Blessed Martin was beatified by Gregory XVI.

Prayer

O God, the exalter of the humble, who didst make Blessed Martin, Thy Confessor, to enter the heavenly kingdom, grant, through his merits and intercession, that we may so follow the example of his humility on earth as to deserve to be exalted with him in heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

NOVEMBER 7

Blessed Peter of Ruffia, Martyr

(A.D. 1365)

BLESSED PETER was one of that illustrious company **Nov. 7** of saints which Piedmont has furnished to the Order, and was born of the noble family of the Cambiani, at Ruffia, near Turin. At an early age he conceived a sovereign contempt for all earthly things, and bidding farewell to the world and its vanities, entered the Order of Preachers. He strove to emulate the noble examples which had been set by those who had gone before him, and soon attained to great eminence both in wisdom and practical piety. He was especially remarkable for his profound humility, his patient endurance of the hardships of poverty, and his complete detachment from family ties. Night and day he gave himself to prayer and contemplation, so that his conversation might truly be said to be in heaven.

Northern Italy was at that time grievously infected by heresy, and Blessed Peter was appointed Inquisitor of the faith, with Turin for his headquarters, whence he was to watch over the interests of religion in all the surrounding districts. For many years he discharged the duties of this office with the utmost zeal and fidelity, preaching indefatigably and doing all in his power to convert the heretics and to preserve the faithful from falling into error. His labours were singularly blessed; he succeeded in rescuing many souls who had been led astray by false teachers and in saving many others from being deceived.

Hence he became an object of deadly hatred to

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Nov. 7 the heretics, and they resolved to compass his destruction. When, therefore, the intrepid champion of truth had occasion to visit Segusia and was receiving hospitality from the Franciscans in that place, he was attacked and slain by the enemies of the faith on the Feast of the Purification of our Blessed Lady, A.D. 1365. The sacred remains of the martyr were removed to the Church of Saint Dominic at Turin, where they received honourable burial, and a yearly festival was there celebrated in his honour on the 7th of November, the anniversary of the translation of his relics. He was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, who didst mercifully grant to Blessed Peter, Thy servant, to be crowned with martyrdom in defence of the true faith, grant by his merits and intercession that we may be able continually to please Thee by faith which worketh by charity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOVEMBER 9

Feast of All Saints of the Dominican Order

Nov. 9 THE Church has instituted the Festival of All Saints, as a well-known spiritual writer tells us, "first, to give thanks to God for the graces and crowns of all His elect; secondly, to excite ourselves to a fervent imitation of their virtues by considering the holy example of so many faithful servants of God of all ages, sexes, and conditions, and by contemplating the inexpressible and eternal bliss which they already enjoy, and to which we are invited; thirdly, to implore the Divine mercy through this multitude of

powerful intercessors; fourthly, to repair any failures or sloth in not having duly honoured God in His saints on their particular festivals, and to glorify Him in the saints who are unknown to us, or for whom no particular festivals are appointed" (Rev. Alban Butler). Nov. 9

Induced by these same motives, the great religious Orders of the Church have solicited permission from the Holy See to celebrate an annual festival in honour of those amongst their children who "have fought the good fight" here below and are now numbered with the Saints in the Church Triumphant. This privilege was first granted to the Benedictines; the Order of Preachers was the next to receive it, through the Dominican Cardinal, Vincent Maria Orsini, who obtained this favour of Pope Clement X., A.D. 1674. In reply to his Eminence's petition, the Holy Father is reported to have said: "Rightly, my Lord Cardinal, ought your Order to celebrate the solemnity of all its Saints on one appointed day; for, if we wished to assign to each of its holy sons his own special feast, we should have to form a new calendar, and they alone would suffice to fill it."

It may not be without interest to record in this place the number of Saint Dominic's children who, up to the present date, A.D. 1900, have received the honours of canonization and beatification. The canonized Saints of the Order are 14 in number; its Beati, 215. By far the majority of these belong, of course, to the First or Great Order; but the Second Order of cloistered women has 10 representatives, and the Third Order, 66. We may add to the figures given above, Blessed Jane of Aza, the mother of our Holy Father, Saint Dominic, 58 members of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary, beatified with our Japanese Martyrs, and 7 Martyrs belonging to the Dominican Mission of Eastern Tonquin.

Nov. 9 Besides those on whose sanctity the Church has thus set her seal, there are several whose process of beatification is already begun in the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and a vast multitude to whose name popular devotion habitually attaches the title of Blessed. The General Chapter of Valencia caused a list to be drawn up of the martyrs of the Order between the years 1234 and 1335, and it was found to contain 13,370 names. In the sixteenth century alone, 26,000 of the children of Saint Dominic gave their lives for the faith; and an author writing in the year 1882 states as an ascertained fact, that, from the foundation of the Order down to our own day, there has never been a single decade of years without some addition to the blood-stained roll of its martyrs.¹ The century now closing has furnished its quota in the far East, where the chronicle of the Dominican Mission in Tonquin may be said to be written in blood.

But there are other martyrdoms besides that of blood, and who shall reckon up the number of Saint Dominic's children whose lives have been consumed for the aim and object of his Order, the salvation of the souls for whom Christ died, in missionary labours, in the pulpit, the confessional, the professor's chair, the hospital, or the school, or in the humbler sphere of domestic labour in the service of their Community, or again in the cloistered seclusion of their Convents, by the secret crucifixion of the spirit and the holy apostleship of intercessory prayer and suffering?

It is difficult to realize the number of those who have worked out their sanctification by the observance of the Dominican Rule, but some idea may be formed of the multitude of those who have served God in the white habit of Saint Dominic by the knowledge that,

¹ R. P. H. M. Iweins, O.P. "L'Ordre des Frères-Prêcheurs." Louvain.

within thirty years of its foundation, the Order already **Nov. 9** reckoned 30,000 members; and when the census was again taken at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the First or Great Order alone numbered upwards of 40,000 members. The calamities of the latter part of the eighteenth century and the proscription of religious institutes in the nineteenth in countries calling themselves Catholic, have led to a lamentable diminution in the numbers of the First and Second Orders. The Third Order, on the other hand, or at least that branch of it which is formed of religious women living in community, was never so flourishing in numbers or so actively engaged in works of zeal and charity as in our own day.

To the children of Saint Dominic, November 9 is a family festival, and the office of the feast comes as a trumpet-call, reminding them that they are the children of Saints, as holy Tobias said, and that they must do nothing unworthy of their noble spiritual lineage, and stirring them up to walk with renewed fervour and fidelity in the path which their Saints have trodden. No matter whether the lot of Dominicans be cast in the old historic lands of Europe, where, under strangely altered conditions of society, they carry on the same work which was being done by their predecessors in the thirteenth century; amidst the new and vigorous life of North America; or in that Southern half of the same great continent, first evangelized by their Brethren; in the West Indian Islands, where they are renewing Saint Catharine's heroic work of tending the lepers; on the plains of Mesopotamia, hallowed by patriarchal memories, where but yesterday they brought so vast a harvest into the garner of the Church; in China and Tonquin, where the soil is still wet with the blood of their martyrs; or in far-off South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, where they

Nov. 9 are the pioneers of their Order—they one and all gather in spirit to-day at the feet of their common Father, congratulating him on the fruits of his labours, and praying that, through his powerful intercession and that of the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, their Mother and Mistress, they too, when this life's pilgrimage is ended, may be numbered with the Saints in glory everlasting.

Prayer

O God, who hast vouchsafed to make the Order of Preachers fruitful in an abundant progeny of Saints, and hast gloriously crowned in them the merits of all heroic virtues; grant unto us to follow their footsteps, that we may at last be united in perpetual festivity with those in heaven whom we venerate to-day under one celebration upon earth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOVEMBER 14

Blessed John Liccio, Confessor

(A. D. 1446-1511)

Nov. 14 BLESSED JOHN LICCIO was born at Caccamo, in Sicily, about A.D. 1446. His mother died in giving him birth, and his father, either taking a dislike to the infant from this cause, or impelled by extreme poverty, cruelly ordered him to be reared on scanty and unwholesome food. The child was nearly killed by this treatment; but one day, when his father was absent, a charitable woman of the neighbourhood begged his aunt, who had charge of him, to allow her to take him to her house and give him proper nourishment, offering to do so without remuneration. Her charity brought its own reward. Her husband, who had lost the use of his limbs for a long time, was suddenly and com-

pletely cured as soon as the infant was laid upon his bed. The father, hearing of the miracle on his return home, took the child back and continued his former cruelties. The infirm man immediately fell ill again, and remained so until his wife had persuaded the inhuman parent to let her have the little one once more, and to allow her to give him the care and nourishment which his age required. The father died soon after, and little John was brought up by his aunt, who treated him with great kindness. Nov. 14

The child gave early signs of his future sanctity. Nearly the whole of his time was spent in church, and the number of vocal prayers which he daily recited would seem almost incredible, even if recorded of a grown-up person. He used to fast every Friday and Saturday on bread and water, and was often found praying before a crucifix, shedding abundant tears. When he was about fifteen, he chanced to go to Palermo, where he had the good fortune to meet Blessed Peter Jeremia, and was by him induced to enter the Order. He accordingly took the habit in the Convent of Saint Zita in that city, where in course of time he became equally distinguished for his eloquence as a preacher and his learning as a theologian, whilst the fervour and austerity of his life gained for him also the reputation of a Saint.

Moved by a holy patriotism, Blessed John earnestly desired to found a Convent of the Order in his native place, that the country people might enjoy the benefits flowing from the preaching and holy example of the Friars. With the permission of his Superiors, therefore, he set out for Caccamo with two companions, preaching and converting souls as he journeyed along. His undertaking was fraught with many difficulties, as he was utterly destitute of means for carrying it out. In all simplicity he had recourse to prayer, feeling con-

Nov. 14 vinced that God would show him how he was to put his plan into execution. Nor was his holy confidence deceived. An angel appeared to him and bade him begin to erect his Convent on the spot where he should find the foundations already dug. Whilst he was musing with some perplexity on the meaning of these words, the news was brought him that in a neighbouring wood some peasants had just discovered a regularly begun foundation, which, having never been seen there before, they judged to be the work of the Angels. Blessed John immediately recognized the Divine token, and the Convent subsequently built on the spot received the name of Saint Mary of the Angels.

Money and materials were still wanting to him, but again he had recourse to prayer; and, having spent the night in this holy exercise, in the morning he beheld an angel in the form of a handsome young man standing at his door with a pair of oxen and a cart laden with building materials. The angel immediately disappeared, and the holy man began the erection of his Convent. In this way, constantly receiving miraculous assistance from Heaven, he at length completed the building, and became the first Prior, A.D. 1494.

The people now vied with each other in offering alms and revenues for the endowment of the new Convent. But Blessed John was a devoted lover of holy poverty and would accept only of a small grove of olive trees to supply oil for the lamps and a piece of ground for a garden. He rewarded the charity of his benefactors by blessing and multiplying their crops, and by working many other miracles on their behalf. He showed himself a true father to the poor and consoler of the afflicted, and never suffered a single day to pass without performing some corporal or spiritual work of mercy.

He had a tender devotion to the Passion of our Lord,

and his rich and fervid eloquence when he preached on **Nov. 14** this his favourite subject was capable of melting the hardest hearts. Hence, after his death, which took place A.D. 1511, his portrait was painted over his tomb, representing him embracing the Cross and the other instruments of the Passion. He was beatified by Benedict XIV.

Prayer

O God, who didst make Blessed John, Thy Confessor, illustrious by perfect self-denial and singular zeal for Divine charity, grant unto us that, after his example, we may forsake all earthly affections and live evermore in Thy love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Patronage of Our Blessed Lady

2ND SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER

THE festival kept throughout the Dominican Order on the 2nd Sunday of November is a family feast, kept by the children of Saint Dominic in memory of, and in gratitude for, the countless benefits they have received through the virginal hands of her whom their Constitutions call "our special Advocate and our most tender Mother and Patroness, who ever intercedes for us with God." On that day they beg of her, with renewed sentiments of confidence and gratitude, to continue to show herself a Mother to them, and to protect and deliver them in all their troubles and distresses, as she has ever done from the foundation of the Order even to our own day. **2nd Sun. in Nov.**

It may be useful here briefly to recall some few of the most striking favours granted to the Order by its Heavenly Mother. She it was who, when her Son was

X

2nd Sun.
in Nov.

angry with the world, pleaded with Him for mercy, and presented to Him her two faithful clients, Saint Dominic and Saint Francis, praying him to send them forth to convert sinners. When the Holy Patriarch of the Friars Preachers beheld in vision religious of every Order standing before God, and wept because he saw none of his own children, our Lord comforted him by the words: "I have given thine Order to my Mother." Then the Blessed Virgin opened her mantle, extending it before the eyes of Saint Dominic, so that its immensity seemed to cover the whole space of the heavenly country, and he saw under its folds a vast multitude of his children. This vision of the members of the Order gathered under the mantle of Mary was granted also to Blessed Ceslas, the brother of Saint Hyacinth, as well as to two holy recluses in Germany and Lombardy. Like a true Mother, Mary clothed her children, bestowing on them with her own hands that white scapular, which, as the novice is reminded at the moment of receiving it, is "the most distinguished part of the Dominican habit, the maternal pledge from heaven of the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary towards us."

To Saint Dominic and his sons she entrusted the preaching of her Rosary, the special birthright and heritage of the Order. She has often shown herself in vision to her children, during the singing of the Salve, prostrating at the feet of her Divine Son, and pleading for the Order so dear to her heart.

When Pope Innocent IV. published a Bull, A.D. 1244, by which the privileges of the Order were taken away and the Brethren left exposed to the unfriendly attacks of their opponents, they had recourse to Mary as to their only hope; and when, eleven years later, Pope Alexander IV. revoked the Bull of his predecessor and restored all the ancient rights and privi-

leges of the Order, these benefits were recognized to be directly the gift of God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. 2nd Sun.
in Nov.

Of the favours bestowed by the Mother of God on the Saints of the Order and of their filial love and devotion towards her, it is impossible here to speak. She was their helper and consoler in life and their secure refuge at the hour of death. Hence from the first century of its existence it has been the universal practice in the Order to sing her Salve round the deathbed of its members, that so the children of Saint Dominic may pass from this vale of tears, their hearts echoing the familiar prayer whereby they have daily entreated the Mother of Mercy to show them, when this life's exile is ended, the blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus.

Prayer

O God, who hast been pleased that the Order of Preachers should be instituted for the salvation of souls under the special patronage of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and should be laden with her perpetual benefits, grant to us, Thy suppliants, that we may be brought to heavenly glory protected by the assistance of her whose commemoration we this day celebrate. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOVEMBER 15

Blessed Albert the Great, Bishop and Confessor

(A. D. 1203-1280)

THIS distinguished man was born at Laubing in Nov. 15 Swabia, on the banks of the Danube, about A.D. 1203. He was of noble parentage and sent to study at the

Nov. 15 University of Padua, where, however, he made little or no progress, being naturally dull and incapable of learning. But, in spite of his incapacity for human science, Blessed Albert made rapid advances in the science of the Saints and would willingly have devoted all his time to prayer and meditation. He was specially fond of praying in the Dominican church ; but his uncle, who had charge of him, and who feared that he might be led to enter the Order, exacted from him a promise not to set foot in that church for a stated time. The promise was faithfully observed, but the youth continued to practise the devotion of the Rosary, which he had learnt from the Friars, earnestly imploring our Blessed Lady to obtain for him light to know the way in which God willed that he should serve Him and save his soul. One day, when he was thus praying before her image, she appeared to him surrounded by light, and gave him the assurance of her continual patronage and of his eternal salvation, provided he should enter the Order of Preachers, of which she had obtained the institution from her Divine Son. As soon, therefore, as he was free from the engagement entered into with his uncle, he received the habit from the hands of Blessed Jordan of Saxony and was immediately sent to study at Cologne.

Here Blessed Albert found himself the companion and brother in religion of some of the most distinguished learned men of the day ; and, being himself of very dull parts, the humiliating contrast filled him with confusion and discouragement. He was even on the point of giving up his vocation and abandoning the Order, when his Heavenly Mother once more came to his aid in a prophetic dream. It seemed to him that he was in the act of escaping from the Convent, when he found his way barred by some ladies of noble aspect, who, having inquired into the cause of his

flight, led him to the feet of one who appeared to be **Nov. 15** their Queen and bade him ask her for the help he needed. Albert accordingly entreated Mary to take pity on him, and to obtain for him an illuminating grace to understand philosophy, which was then the subject of his study. The Mother of God condescended to his request, bidding him devote himself henceforth to prayer and study in the Order to which she had called him. He awoke to find himself no longer the same man, and the world very soon heard of the fame in every branch of science of "Albert the Philosopher." He became distinguished for his proficiency in natural science as well as in philosophy and theology. Indeed, his profound mastery of physical science in a day when such subjects were but little studied, gained for him among the vulgar the reputation of being a magician, in which character he figures in the popular tales and ballads of Germany. So deeply did he penetrate into the secrets of nature, that his humility became alarmed, and he prayed earnestly to his Heavenly Mother that she would not suffer his learning to be hurtful to his soul, and that he might use it solely for the glory of God. Our Lady once more appeared, and consoled him, promising him that his faith should not fail, and predicting that, in token of his wisdom being a heavenly gift, it should all be taken from him in the midst of a public disputation some time before his death.

After teaching in several of the convents of Germany, Blessed Albert was sent to Paris, where such vast crowds flocked to hear him that he was obliged to deliver his lectures in the open air on a spot afterwards called "Place Maubert," *i.e.* the square of "Maître (Master) Albert."

After the death of Blessed Jordan he governed the Order in the capacity of Vicar-General until the elec-

Nov. 15 tion of Saint Raymund. He then returned to Cologne, and soon afterwards had as his disciples Saint Thomas Aquinas, Blessed Ambrose of Siena, Blessed James of Mevania, and other distinguished men. When a virulent attack was made on the mendicant Orders by the jealous hatred of William de Saint Amour, Blessed Albert took a leading part in the defence. He ruled the German Province of the Order with great firmness and prudence, and maintained regular observance with the utmost strictness. Pope Urban IV. made him Bishop of Ratisbon, in which office he showed himself a true father of the poor and a faithful shepherd of the flock. After a time, by his earnest entreaties, he obtained permission to resign his dignity and retired into his beloved Convent of Cologne. He was compelled, however, to leave his solitude in order to take part in the General Council of Lyons, A.D. 1274, after which he returned to Cologne to resume his life of prayer, study, and teaching.

In the year 1277, in the midst of a public lecture, the holy old man suddenly lost the thread of his argument and found himself unable to proceed. Recognizing the fulfilment of the words spoken to him by our Blessed Lady long years before, he related to his astonished audience the history of his life, telling them how all his extraordinary intellectual gifts had come to him through Mary's intercession, and that their present failure was a sign of his approaching death. The three remaining years of his life were entirely consecrated to exercises of devotion; and, having received the Last Sacraments, he died without an illness, seated in his chair, surrounded by his Brethren, on November 15, A.D. 1280. He was beatified by Clement X.

Prayer

Graciously hear these our prayers, we beseech Thee, **Nov. 15**
O Lord, which we offer up to Thee in memory of
Blessed Albert, Thy Confessor and Bishop, that, as he
deserved to do Thee worthy service, so, through his
merits and intercession, Thou wouldst mercifully ab-
solve us from all our sins. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

NOVEMBER 16

Blessed Lucy of Narni, Virgin

(A.D. 1476-1544)

BLESSED LUCY was born at Narni, in Umbria, on the **Nov. 16**
13th of November, A.D. 1476, of the noble family of the
Broccolelli. When she was quite a little child, one of
her uncles brought some toys and pious objects from
Rome as presents to his nephews and nieces. Lucy
immediately made choice of a rosary and a little statue
of the Infant Jesus as her share of the gifts; and this
"Christarello," as she called it, became the cherished
object of her devotion. Going one day, when she was
seven years old, to visit another uncle, in whose house
she remembered to have seen a room, on the ceiling of
which was a painting representing the holy angels, she
wanted to behold the picture once more. She was un-
willing to have any companion who might disturb her
devotions, and yet the staircase which led to the room
was too steep and difficult for her to climb alone. She
therefore had recourse, as usual, to the Infant Jesus,
and found herself miraculously transported to the
apartment in question. Whilst praying there, she was
favoured with a heavenly vision of our Divine Lord,
accompanied by His Blessed Mother, Saint Dominic,

Nov. 16 Saint Catharine of Siena, and a glorious troop of angels and of saints. Jesus then espoused her to Himself, placing a precious ring upon her finger; and Saint Dominic and Saint Catharine took her under their special protection, the former bestowing upon her the scapular of his Order, which she continued to wear under her secular attire until she was able to assume it in public. Many other heavenly favours, together with the gift of prophecy, were granted to her during her childhood; and she was thrice miraculously restored to health by Saint Catharine of Siena and Saint Peter, Martyr.

As she grew older, her family sought to give her in marriage, but Lucy firmly and courageously resisted; until at length our Blessed Lady revealed to her that it was the will of God that she should accept the hand of a certain Count Pietro, and that her married life was to be an imitation of the holiness and purity of the house of Nazareth. Though she now had the management of a large household, which is said to have been as devout and well-ordered as a religious community, Blessed Lucy relaxed nothing of her customary exercises of prayer and practised heroic penance, daily receiving the discipline at the hands of one of her maids. Prompted by a spirit of humility, she would clothe herself in coarse and shabby clothes, and during several hours every day take part with her servants in the domestic work of the house, after which she resumed the rich attire which befitted her rank.

After about four years of married life, Blessed Lucy resolved, in obedience to the express command of Heaven, to leave her husband and carry out her early desires of consecrating herself entirely to her Heavenly Spouse. She retired for a time to her mother's house, where the Prior of the Dominican Convent of Narni gave her the habit of the Third Order in the presence of

witnesses, and a week later received her to profession. Nov. 16
She then proceeded to Rome, where her uncles procured her admission into a Monastery dedicated to Saint Catharine of Siena, in which she spent nearly a year. After this, she was sent to found a Convent of the Order at Viterbo; and three years later, when she had attained the age of twenty-three, at the earnest request of Duke Hercules d'Este, the Pope commanded her to repair to Ferrara and establish a Convent in that city, of which she was appointed perpetual Prioress. During this time she had much to suffer from the Count, her husband; but she at length succeeded in inducing him to take the habit of Saint Francis, in which he lived and died holily.

Amongst many other miraculous visions and favours, Blessed Lucy was visibly marked with the sacred stigmata. She was held in universal esteem for her sanctity and miracles, and for her spirit of prophecy. But our Lord loved His faithful Spouse too well to leave her without a large share in His own chalice of suffering. Accordingly, after the death of her patron, the Duke of Ferrara, some members of the Community, whom she had had occasion to reprove for their evil lives, conspired against her, and by their calumnies, which were believed by the Superiors of the Order and by the Sovereign Pontiff himself, procured her deposition from office. She was made to take the lowest place, deprived of any voice in the affairs of the Convent she had founded, forbidden to go out of the house or to speak with seculars, or even with her confessor, in whose place another confessor was assigned her who was prejudiced against her. For the remaining thirty-eight years of her life Blessed Lucy thus remained beneath the shadow of the Cross, often afflicted also in body by serious illness, in which she received no assistance from the Community, who had allowed themselves

Nov. 16 to be strangely blinded to her true character. But our Lord sent His Saints to visit and console her from heaven, and on one occasion miraculously transported Blessed Catharine of Raconigi, who was then still living, from her home in Savoy to spend the night in the cell of Blessed Lucy, whom she had ardently desired to see.

The end came at last on the 15th of November, A.D. 1544. Having received the Last Sacraments, and with the joyful cry on her lips, "Away, away to heaven!" she happily departed to her Spouse, whilst angelic melodies floated in the air around. Then the eyes of her Sisters were opened, and they buried her with great honour. Many miracles followed her death, and she was beatified by Benedict XIII.

Prayer

O God, who didst wonderfully adorn the Blessed Lucy with the marks of the Passion of Thy Son, and with the gifts of virginity and patience, and didst enable her to elude the blandishments of the world, and to overcome its persecutions; grant that by her intercession and example we may neither be overcome by the allurements of the world nor sink under any of its adversities. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOVEMBER 25

Saint Catharine of Alexandria, Virgin and Martyr, Protectress of the Dominican Order

Nov. 25 SAINT CATHARINE was born of noble parents at Alexandria in Egypt, and was richly gifted both in mind and body. She belonged to a pagan family, and

at first studied the doctrines of Christianity merely out of curiosity. She was captivated by their purity and beauty, but still held back from submitting her understanding to the obedience of faith. A beautiful legend represents her to us as having been favoured with a vision of our Blessed Lady, who bore the Divine Infant in her arms. Catharine was enraptured with His charms ; but, when she would fain have caressed Him, He refused to look at her and even drove her from Him, saying that He could not bear the sight of her because she was unbaptized. As a result of this vision, she at last embraced the faith ; and, shortly afterwards, she again beheld the Virgin Mother and the Holy Child, who this time pressed her to His heart and mystically espoused her to Himself, placing a ring upon her finger. Thenceforth she gave herself wholly to His love and service.

When the Emperor Maximin began his persecution of the Christians in Alexandria, Saint Catharine, who was but eighteen years of age, boldly rebuked him for his impiety. The tyrant inquired into the history of the fair and modest maiden who stood so courageously before him ; and, on learning that she was much given to the study of philosophy, he summoned learned men from all parts of his empire to come and dispute with her, and, if possible, induce her to renounce the faith. Fifty philosophers obeyed the imperial call ; but Saint Catharine silenced them by her invincible arguments, and succeeded in winning them all to Christ, for whose Name they suffered a glorious martyrdom by fire.

The Emperor then had recourse to promises and flatteries in order to persuade the Holy Virgin to give up Christianity. Finding these of no avail, he caused her to be most cruelly scourged, and then shut up in a dark prison, and left without food. All were

Nov. 25

Nov. 25 astonished at the fortitude with which this young and delicate maiden bore her torments. Moved by curiosity, the Empress herself came to visit her, accompanied by Porphyry, the captain of the guard, and two hundred soldiers. Such was the divine power imparted to the burning words of Saint Catharine that she persuaded her visitors to embrace the faith, and they all subsequently shed their blood for Christ. Our Lord miraculously supplied the Saint with food in her captivity, sent His angels to comfort her and cure her wounds, and even vouchsafed to come Himself to visit her. Hence when, at the end of twelve days, she was again summoned before the Emperor, he found her, to his astonishment, as beautiful and in as good health as when she had first presented herself before him.

As neither threats nor promises were of any avail to induce her to offer sacrifice to the idols, Maximin ordered her to be torn to pieces on an instrument of torture consisting of four wheels armed with sharp spikes. But no sooner was the Spouse of Christ fastened to it than an angel broke her bonds, and at the same time wrenched the wheels asunder with such force that they dashed against the pagans and killed several of them. Then the tyrant commanded that the Saint should be beheaded. On hearing the sentence she exclaimed: "O Jesus, good King, I await the sword for Thy sake; do Thou deign to receive my spirit, and to show mercy to those who honour my memory." And a heavenly voice made answer: "Come, My chosen one, come; enter into the bridal chamber of thy Spouse. Thou hast obtained the grant of thy petition, and it shall be well with them that praise thee." After her death, which took place early in the fourth century, a graceful legend represents her body as having been borne by the angels to the summit of Mount Sinai and there buried by them.

Some authors, however, assert that by "angels" we are to understand monks, who were regarded as earthly angels; and that Saint Catharine's remains, after being first interred in Egypt, were translated in the eighth century to the celebrated monastery on Mount Sinai, which had been built by Saint Helen and enlarged and beautified by the Emperor Justinian. Nov. 25

In consequence of her extraordinary learning, Saint Catharine is regarded as the patroness of Christian philosophy; and this circumstance, taken in connection with her successful apostolate for souls, is doubtless the main cause of her being considered as a special Protectress of the Order of Preachers, which glories in the name of the Order of Truth and has ever been distinguished alike for its eminent learning and its zeal for souls. The Saint has herself deigned on several occasions to manifest a particular interest in the children of Saint Dominic, as the lives of their Saints testify. To mention but three instances. It was she who, together with Saint Cecilia, accompanied our Blessed Lady when she anointed Blessed Reginald and gave him the habit of the Order, which she is said to have taken from the hands of the Virgin Martyr of Alexandria. The same two Martyr Spouses of Christ were again in attendance on the Mother of God when she showed herself to our Holy Father in the dormitory at Santa Sabina, sprinkling the Brethren with holy water as they slept. Finally, it was Saint Catharine who, in company with the other holy Protectress of the Order, Saint Mary Magdalen, came with the Queen of Heaven to bring the miraculous picture of Saint Dominic to Soriano.

Prayer

O God, who didst give the law to Moses on the summit of Mount Sinai, and didst by Thy holy angels

- Nov. 25** wonderfully transport the body of Blessed Catharine, Thy Virgin and Martyr, to the same place, grant, we beseech Thee, that by her merits and intercession we may be able to come to the mountain which is Christ. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

NOVEMBER 27

Blessed Margaret of Savoy, Widow

(A.D. 1382-1464)

- Nov. 27** BLESSED MARGARET was the daughter of Amadeus II., Prince of Piedmont, of the House of Savoy, and was born about A.D. 1382. Her remarkable beauty and virtue caused her hand to be eagerly sought by many illustrious suitors; it was granted about A.D. 1403 to the Marquis of Montserrat, as a means of consolidating the peace which had recently been made between the Italian princes. He was worthy of his saintly consort, and acquired among his contemporaries the honourable title of Theodore the Religious. Their life together exhibited a bright example of every virtue which could adorn their lofty station. They were animated to yet greater fervour and more munificent liberality to the Church and the poor by the preaching of Saint Vincent Ferrer, under whose direction Blessed Margaret commenced the practice of severe but secret austerity and of almost continual prayer.

Her husband dying in the fifteenth year of their married life, Blessed Margaret immediately consecrated herself to the King of Heaven by a vow of perpetual chastity, and retired into private life in the city of Alba. Here she gave herself up entirely to exercises of charity and devotion. The fame of her beauty and virtue induced many princes, and amongst others

Philip Visconti, Duke of Milan, to seek her in marriage, **Nov. 27** but she firmly rejected all such overtures, assigning as her reason the vow by which she had bound herself. The Duke of Milan, however, would take no refusal; and, having obtained from the Pope an ample dispensation from the vow, pressed his suit with renewed earnestness. Margaret was in no way affected by these embassies, and replied with the same firmness as before that she sought for no dispensation from her voluntary vow to be the Spouse of none but God, and that she trusted in the Duke's charity not further to disturb her retirement. In order to assume a character which should effectually protect her from all such solicitations for the future, she took the habit of the Third Order, by the counsel of her former director, Saint Vincent, who, having now departed to a better life, appeared to her in a vision to comfort and advise her. Many noble ladies joined her in her retirement, and together they devoted themselves to works of mercy and piety.

Blessed Margaret was soon attacked by a painful malady, which almost shook her patience. But our Blessed Lady visited her on her sick-bed to encourage her to resignation, and our Lord Himself appeared to her, surrounded by a multitude of angels, holding in His hand three darts inscribed with the words: Calumny, Sickness, and Persecutions, bidding her choose amongst them. The servant of God abandoned herself wholly to His Divine will, and He left her with all three, which she received and lovingly embraced, as the vision vanished from her sight. Very soon its fulfilment was seen in the accumulation of trials of each kind which poured in upon her. The calumnies proceeded chiefly from the court of the Duke of Milan, who accused her to the Pope of trying to revive the heresy of the Waldenses. The only effect of these

Nov. 27 trials on Blessed Margaret was to increase her desire to give herself wholly to God. She accordingly built a Convent at Alba, dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalen, in which she and her companions made their solemn profession, forming in all an enclosed Community of sixty, a Dominican Father of the name of Manfred being appointed their Apostolic Vicar and Superior, and Blessed Margaret herself becoming the first Prioress.

In this capacity it was her earnest endeavour to preserve the true spirit of religious observance amongst those committed to her care, and God gave her a wonderful insight into the souls of her spiritual children. Thus, one Sister who had borne the reputation of a Saint happening to die, the Community were in great grief and loud in their expressions of admiration for the holiness of the deceased religious. Blessed Margaret, however, put small trust in the appearance of sanctity which had so successfully imposed upon others. She felt an inward doubt even as to the salvation of this soul; and, as she was praying to God for the discovery of the truth, the deceased sister appeared to her and declared herself eternally lost, all her good works having been performed out of a desire of human praise. Then, stooping to the ground, the miserable creature took up a handful of dust which she threw into the air, exclaiming: "Such were my actions!" and then disappeared.

Blessed Margaret worked many miracles, curing the sick, multiplying the provisions of the Convent, and calming by her prayers a horrible tempest which threatened to destroy the city of Alba. When the storm ceased, the voices of the evil spirits were heard in the air, cursing her by name for having frustrated their malignant designs. Two days before her happy death, she desired the Sisters to lift her out of bed and lay her prostrate on the ground at the feet of our

Lord. They complied with her desire, though they themselves could see nothing. Then the cell became radiant with celestial light and a sweet harmony announced the presence of the angelic choirs and of our Divine Lord Himself, whom Blessed Margaret adored with expressions of the most ardent love. These heavenly harmonies were heard also on the following day, which was the Feast of Saint Cecilia. As the dying servant of God received the Last Sacraments, an unknown religious was observed supporting her, who was believed to be Saint Catharine of Siena. At her death, which took place on November 23, A.D. 1464, the bell tolled of itself, and woke up the citizens of Alba, many of whom beheld a resplendent procession of Saints, bearing lighted torches in their hands, directing their steps towards the Convent. Many miracles ensued, and Blessed Margaret was finally beatified by Clement X.

Prayer

O God, who didst teach Blessed Margaret to forsake with all her heart the pomps of this world for the humble following of Thy Cross, grant that, by her merits and example, we may learn to tread under foot the perishable delights of the world, and in the embraces of Thy Cross to overcome all adversities. Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

NOVEMBER 29

Blessed James Benefatti, Bishop and Confessor

(A.D. 1338)

BLESSED JAMES was born at Mantua, and entered the Dominican Order in the Convent of that city, in which

Nov. 29

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Nov. 29 he became a mirror of learning and holiness. His virtue and talents greatly endeared him to Cardinal Nicholas Boccasino, who had been General of the Order, and who subsequently was raised to the See of Saint Peter under the title of Benedict XI., and to the altars of the Church by solemn beatification. Blessed James became the chosen companion of his journeys when Cardinal, and was retained near his person after his elevation to the pontificate. He was also held in great esteem by Pope John XXII., who (A.D. 1320) consecrated him Bishop of his native city of Mantua. Blessed James governed the diocese committed to his care with the utmost justice, zeal, and charity for the space of eighteen years, earning for himself the character of a faithful shepherd and a true father of the poor, and universally regarded as a model of sanctity. His death took place on November 19, 1338, and he was laid to rest, according to his own desire, in the Church of his Order at Mantua, which he had enriched with valuable altar furniture.

So numerous and remarkable were the miracles worked immediately after his death, that the title of Blessed was at once popularly bestowed upon him and was even inscribed on his tombstone; and his picture, with his head surrounded by rays of light, was placed in the Choir of the religious. In course of time, however, his memory fell into oblivion, until the year 1483, when, as some repairs were being made in the church, his tomb was accidentally opened and his body was found perfectly incorrupt, the coffin and winding-sheet being as fresh and unsoiled as though he had just been buried. A number of miracles again attested the sanctity of the holy Bishop, and his sacred remains were removed to a more suitable place near the High Altar, where the faithful were in the habit of burning many lamps and tapers in his honour.

The devotion to Blessed James again somewhat cooled down, probably owing to the fact that no particulars of his life had been preserved, but it was revived once more in the year 1604, when the tomb was again opened, two hundred and sixty-six years after his death, and the body was once more found almost entire. The Bishop of Mantua assisted at this second translation; and, declaring Blessed James to have enjoyed from time immemorial the honours of a Saint, he solemnly chanted the Antiphon and Prayer of a Bishop and Confessor in presence of a great concourse of people. The holy remains were then carried in procession to the Sacristy, where they were deposited until the repairs of the church were completed. Wonderful to relate, whilst they reposed there, fresh blood flowed from a part of the body where the skin had been broken, and worked many miracles. Blessed James appears to have special power to deliver those who are possessed by evil spirits. He was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, who didst grant to Blessed James, Thy Confessor and Bishop, faithfully to discharge all the duties of a good shepherd, grant us, by his intercession, that, walking by the way of Thy commandments, we may deserve to find a home for ever among the sheep of Thy pasture. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

DECEMBER 16

Blessed Sebastian Maggi, Confessor

(A.D. 1496)

BLESSED SEBASTIAN, of the noble family of the Maggi, Dec. 16 was born at Brescia in the north of Italy early in the

Dec. 16 fifteenth century. From boyhood he gave evident signs of future sanctity, and, in order more effectually to secure his own salvation and to labour for that of others, he entered the Dominican Order at an early age. He ever united great innocence of life with the practice of severe bodily penance, observed his Rule with the minutest fidelity, and made rapid progress in learning and sanctity. His preaching was attended with wonderful success; he brought great multitudes of sinners to repentance, reconciled many who were at variance, and established or strengthened solid piety in several Italian cities.

He successively governed many Convents of his Order with great prudence and charity and built for his Brethren a much larger and more conveniently situated church than they had hitherto possessed in Milan, in which work he was greatly assisted by the alms of the faithful, and especially of Duchess Beatrice, whose Confessor he was. He twice held the office of Vicar of the reformed Congregation of Lombardy, and was the contemporary and for a time the Superior of another great servant of God, Father Jerome Savonarola, whom he appointed instructor of the Novices at the early age of twenty-nine, within seven years of the commencement of his noviciate. Burlamacchi says that Blessed Sebastian heard the confession of Savonarola more than a hundred times, and had for him all through his life the greatest possible esteem, as he regarded him as a man of pure and blameless life.

The virtues of Blessed Sebastian chiefly displayed themselves in his manner of governing. His authority was mingled with so much charity and humility that he seemed to be rather the servant than the superior of his Brethren. He loved with his own hands to wait upon them when they were in health and to minister to

them when they were sick. It was commonly said of him that he went to visit the sick as joyfully as some would go to a wedding. In correction, his only thought was the glory of God and the amendment of his subject; and he always sought to persuade the offender to acknowledge his fault before receiving punishment. "When you have committed a fault," he would say, "come to me, not as Prior, but as your father. If you will not have me as a father, you will find me a severe judge." Hence, to those who openly and readily acknowledged their faults, he was very indulgent, giving them secret penances and concealing their weaknesses from others, that so they might not be discouraged.

He was of most austere life and a rigid maintainer of religious observance. Never was he known to absent himself from the choir or the refectory; and he was loved and revered by all his subjects for his own exact obedience to the rules he enforced on others. He laboured long at the reformation of the Convent of Lodi, where he and his Brethren led a very hard life, supported only by the alms which they daily begged from door to door.

Blessed Sebastian's death was hastened by his holding a visitation of his Province when he was suffering from grievous sickness and extreme old age. On arriving at the Convent of Santa Maria di Castello at Genoa, he turned to his companions and told them that this would be the place of his rest for ever. Having received the last rites of the Church, he peacefully departed to our Lord, A.D. 1496. His holy body remains incorrupt even to our own day; he has worked many miracles, and is held in great veneration. He was beatified by Clement XIII.

Dec. 16

Prayer

- Dec. 16** O God, who madest Blessed Sebastian, Thy Confessor, wonderful for his singular zeal in the practice of regular discipline and evangelical perfection, mercifully grant that, following his example, we may be mortified in the flesh but quickened in the spirit, and so attain to everlasting rewards. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

DECEMBER 22

Blessed Mary Mancini, Widow

(A.D. 1431)

- Dec. 22** THIS holy servant of God, who is best known under the name of Blessed Mary of Pisa, was called Catharine in baptism, and belonged to the noble family of the Mancini. Whilst still in tender years she began to receive many wonderful supernatural favours. At three years old she was warned by her guardian angel that the portico under which her nurse had laid her was in an unsafe condition; and the moment she left it the building fell to the ground. At five and a half, she was favoured with an extasy, in which she found herself transported to a palace in Pisa, in which Peter Gambacorti, one of the chief citizens, was a prisoner. The unhappy nobleman was at that moment undergoing torture, but at the prayer of the innocent child the rope by which he was suspended broke and he was set free. Our Blessed Lady bade the little Catharine daily recite seven Hail Marias on his behalf, telling her that she would one day be supported at his expense.

When scarcely twelve years old, Catharine's friends compelled her to marry; and before she was sixteen

she found herself a widow. Her family insisted on her once more engaging in the married state; but her second husband died when she was not yet twenty-five. Most of her children had passed away in infancy, and the others did not long survive their father; so that Catharine now found herself able to follow her attraction to prayer and penance with greater freedom than had hitherto been possible. She absolutely refused to yield to the solicitations of her brother, who wanted her to take a third husband; and choosing as her companion a pious servant well advanced in years, she devoted herself to a life of mingled contemplation, austerity, and active works of charity. Every night she took a severe discipline and devoted several hours to prayer, rising for this purpose as soon as she heard the first bell for Matins ring in the neighbouring Convent of the Friars Preachers. Early in the morning she repaired to their church and assisted at all the Masses, and then returned home to spin. Her afternoon was also divided between devotional exercises in the church and humble labour. She distributed her earnings to the poor and sick, whom she constantly visited, only retaining for herself just sufficient to provide the necessities of life. She received many of the sick poor into her house, nursing them with the utmost tenderness and serving them with her own hands.

One day she found at her door a young man of extraordinary beauty, but very poorly clad and covered with wounds. She brought him into the house, and washed and dressed his sores, and, before dismissing him, bade him return as often as he stood in need of the same charitable offices. The young man laid his hand on her head and gave her a solemn blessing, adding that he would not fail to visit her again. After his departure, Catharine, going to perform her customary

Dec. 22

Dec. 22 mortification of drinking some of the water with which she had washed his wounds, tasted such ineffable sweetness, that she began to suspect she had been favoured by some heavenly visitant. Then her Angel told her, that, in reward of her charity to His poor, her Divine Spouse had come Himself in the garb of a beggar to receive her services.

In the spring of the year 1375, Saint Catharine of Siena visited Pisa and a sweet and holy friendship sprang up between her and the holy widow. On Easter Sunday, when they were both praying in the Chapel of the Annunciation in the Dominican church, they were in the sight of all the people covered by a beautiful and shining cloud, out of which flew a white dove. It was probably at this time that the seraphic Saint of Siena persuaded her namesake to enter the Third Order; though others say that the latter took the step in consequence of a vision in which Saint Catharine appeared to her after death, and in which she gave her many practical instructions in the spiritual life.

In course of time, the holy widow retired into the enclosed Convent of the Holy Cross, apparently of the Second Order, receiving in religion the name of Sister Mary. Some of the relaxed habits of the age seem to have crept into this otherwise edifying community; and only seven of its members, including Blessed Mary and the young Blessed Clara Gambacorti, practised poverty in all its strictness. At the end of eight years the two blessed servants of God, accompanied by five other Sisters, withdrew into the new Convent of Saint Dominic, which Peter Gambacorti had built for his daughter; and thus was fulfilled the prophecy which Our Lady had made to Blessed Mary long years before, that she should one day be supported at the expense of that nobleman. Here they lived in great fervour

and strictness of observance. Blessed Mary continued Dec. 22
to be favoured in religion, as she had been in the world, with many supernatural favours and revelations. To obtain the explanation of one of these, she had recourse to Alfonso Vadaterra, Bishop of Jaen and former Confessor of Saint Bridget. He was one of the most distinguished men of his day and an intimate friend of the Gambacorti family; and his reply to Blessed Mary is still preserved. After the death of Blessed Clara, her faithful companion succeeded her in the office of Prioress. She at length happily departed this life on January 22, A.D. 1431, and was beatified by Pius IX.

Prayer

O God, who didst prevent Blessed Mary with the abundance of Thy grace and didst make her wonderful by the gift of contemplation and by exceeding great charity towards her neighbours, grant us, that, by her imitation, meditating on heavenly things and showing mercy to others, we may merit to attain to eternal glory together with her. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

LAUS DEO,
B. MARIE VIRGINI,
B. DOMINICO PATRI NOSTRO,
ET OMNIBUS SANCTIS.
AMEN.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF DOMINICAN SAINTS

Name.	Order.	Date. ¹	Feast.	Page.
Blessed Jane of Aza, Mother of Saint Dominic.	...	About 1190	Aug. 2	215
Blessed Reginald of Orleans, C.	1st	1220	Feb. 12	24
Our Holy Father, Saint Dominic	"	1170-1221	Aug. 4	219
Blessed Bertrand of Garrigua, C.	"	1230	Sept. 6	253
Blessed Mannes, C., Brother of Saint Dominic	"	1155-1235	July 30	213
Blessed Jordan of Saxony, C.	"	1190-1236	Feb. 15	34
Blessed Diana, V.	2nd	1236	June 9	168
Blessed Amata, V.	"	13th century	"	168
Blessed William Arnauld	1st	1242	May 29	152
Blessed Bernard of Rochefort.	"	"	"	"
Blessed Garcia of Aura, Lay Brother	"	"	"	"
Blessed Ceslas, C.	"	1184-1242	July 18	197
Blessed Guala, B.C.	"	1244	Sept. 3	247
Blessed Peter Gonzalez, C.	"	1180-1246	April 14	94
Saint Peter, M.	"	1203-1252	April 29	107
Blessed Nicholas Palea of Giovinazzo, C.	"	1197-1255	Feb. 14	31
Saint Hyacinth, C.	"	1185-1257	Aug. 16	229
Blessed Gonsalvo of Amarantha, C.	"	1187-1259	Jan. 10	1
Blessed Sadoc and his forty-eight companions, Martyrs of Sandomir	"	1260	June 2	163
Blessed John of Salerno, C.	"	13th century	Aug. 9	226
Blessed Egidius of Portugal, C.	"	1183-1265	May 14	130
Blessed Margaret of Hungary, V.	2nd	1242-1270	Jan. 26	15
Blessed Bartholomew Breganza, B.C.	1st	1271	Oct. 23	297
Saint Thomas Aquinas, C.D., Patron of Catholic Schools	"	1225-1274	Mar. 7	64
Saint Raymund Pennafort, C.	"	1175-1275	Jan. 23	10
Blessed Innocent V., P.C.	"	1225-1276	June 22	179
Blessed Albert of Bergamo	3rd	1279	May 13	126
Blessed Albert the Great, B.C.	1st	1203-1280	Nov. 15	323
Blessed Ambrose Sansedonio, C.	"	1220-1286	Mar. 22	75
Blessed Cecilia, V.	2nd	1290	June 9	168
Blessed Benvenuta, V.	3rd	1254-1292	Oct. 29	302
Blessed James of Voragine, B.C.	1st	1230-1298	July 13	194
Blessed Dominic and Gregory, CC.	"	13th century	April 26	106
Blessed James of Mevania, C.	"	1220-1301	Aug. 23	236
Blessed Benedict XI., P.C.	"	1240-1304	July 7	184

¹ Where only one date is given, it is that of death.

Name.	Order.	Date.	Feast.	Page.
Blessed Jane of Orvieto	3rd	1264-1306	July 23	205
Blessed Jordan of Pisa, C.	1st	1311	Mar. 6	61
Blessed James Salomonio, C.	"	1231-1314	May 31	155
Blessed Emily Bicchieri, V.	3rd	1238-1314	Aug. 17	232
Saint Agnes of Monte Pulciano, V.	2nd	1268-1317	April 20	100
Blessed Simon Ballachi, C., Lay Brother	1st	1319	Nov. 3	306
Blessed Margaret of Castello, V.	3rd	1287-1320	April 13	90
Blessed Augustine of Lucera, B.C.	1st	1262-1323	Aug. 8	223
Blessed Imelda Lambertini, V.	2nd	1322-1333	Sept. 16	259
Blessed James Benefatti, B.C.	1st	1338	Nov. 29	337
Blessed Dalmatius Moner, C.	"	1291-1341	Sept. 26	265
Blessed Villana de Botti	3rd	1360	Feb. 28	50
Blessed Henry Suso, C.	1st	1300-1365	Mar. 2	58
Blessed Peter of Ruffia, M.	"	1365	Nov. 7	313
Blessed Sibyllina Biscossi, V.	3rd	1287-1367	Mar. 18	72
Blessed Anthony Pavone, M.	1st	1326-1374	April 9	85
Saint Catharine of Siena, V., Patroness of } Rome	3rd	1347-1380	April 30	111
Blessed Marcolino of Forlì, C.	1st	1317-1397	Jan. 24	13
Blessed Raymund of Capua, C.	"	1330-1399	Oct. 5	278
Saint Vincent Ferrer, C.	"	1346-1419	April 5	81
Blessed Clara Gambacorti, W.	2nd	1362-1419	April 17	96
Blessed Alvarez of Cordova, C.	1st	1420	Feb. 10	42
Blessed John Dominici, B.C.	"	1350-1420	June 10	171
Blessed Maria Mancini, W.	2nd	1431	Dec. 22	342
Blessed Peter of Tiferno, C.	1st	1390-1445	Oct. 22	294
Blessed Stephen Bandelli, C.	"	1369-1450	June 12	174
Blessed Peter di Jeremia, C.	"	1381-1452	Mar. 10	68
Blessed Lawrence of Ripafratta, C.	"	1359-1457	Feb. 18	38
Saint Antoninus, B.C.	"	1390-1459	May 10	118
Blessed Anthony della Chiesa	"	1395-1459	July 28	210
Blessed Anthony Neyrot, M.	"	1460	April 10	87
Blessed Margaret of Savoy, W.	2nd	1382-1464	Nov. 27	334
Blessed Bartholomew of Cerverio, M.	1st	1420-1466	April 21	103
Blessed Matthew Carrerii, C.	"	1470	Oct. 7	281
Blessed Constantius of Fabriano, C.	"	1410-1481	Feb. 25	47
Blessed Christopher of Milan, C.	"	1484	Mar. 1	56
Blessed Damian Furcher, C.	"	1484	Oct. 26	301
Blessed Andrew of Peschiera, C.	"	1485	Jan. 19	7
Blessed Bernard of Scammacca, C.	"	1486	Feb. 9	21
Blessed Jane of Portugal, V.	2nd	1452-1490	May 12	122
Blessed James of Ulm, C., Lay Brother	1st	1407-1491	Oct. 12	287
Blessed Augustine of Bugella, C.	"	1493	July 27	208
Blessed Aimo Taparelli, C.	"	1395-1493	Feb. 21	45
Blessed Sebastian Maggi, C.	"	1496	Dec. 16	339
Blessed Mark of Modena, C.	"	1498	July 3	182
Blessed Columba of Rieti, V.	3rd	1468-1501	May 20	133
Blessed Magdalen Pannatieri, V.	"	1443-1503	Oct. 14	291
Blessed Osanna of Mantua, V.	"	1449-1505	June 18	175
Blessed John Liccio, C.	1st	1446-1511	Nov. 14	318
Blessed Stephana of Soncino, V.	3rd	1457-1530	Jan. 16	4
Blessed Lucy of Narni, V.	"	1476-1544	Nov. 16	327
Blessed Catharine of Racconigi, V.	"	1486-1547	Sept. 5	249
Saint Pius V., P.C.	1st	1504-1572	May 5	114
Saint John of Cologne, Martyr of Gorkum	"	1572	July 9	187

Name.	Order.	Date.	Feast.	Page.	
Blessed Maria Bartolomea Bagnesi, V.	3rd	1514-1577	May 28	149	
Saint Lewis Bertrand, C.	1st	1526-1581	Oct. 10	284	
Saint Catharine de Ricci, V.	3rd	1522-1590	Feb. 13	27	
Saint Rose of Lima, V.	"	1586-1617	Aug. 30	243	
Blessed Alphonsus Naverette	1st	1571-1617	June 1	159	
Blessed John of Saint Dominic	Priests, Martyrs in Japan.	1619	"	"	
Blessed Lewis Flores		1622	"	"	
Blessed Francis Morales		1622	"	"	
Blessed Angelo Orsucci		1622	"	"	
Blessed Alphonsus de Mena		1622	"	"	
Blessed Joseph of Saint Hyacinth		1622	"	"	
Blessed Hyacinth Orphanel		1622	"	"	
Blessed Thomas of the Holy Ghost		1622	"	"	
Blessed Peter Vasquez		1624	"	"	
Blessed Lewis Bertrand		1627	"	"	
Blessed Dominic Castellet	"	1628	"	"	
Blessed Alexis	"	1622	"	"	
Blessed Thomas of the Rosary	Choir Brothers, Martyrs in Japan.	1622	"	"	
Blessed Dominic of the Rosary		17th century	"	"	
Blessed Mancio of Saint Thomas		"	"	"	
Blessed Dominic		"	"	"	
Blessed Mancio of the Cross		1627	"	"	
Blessed Peter of Saint Mary		1627	"	"	
Blessed Thomas of Saint Hyacinth		1628	"	"	
Blessed Anthony of Saint Dominic		1628	"	"	
Blessed Michael Diaz		3rd	"	"	"
Blessed Paul Nangasci		"	"	"	"
Blessed Thecla	"	"	"	"	
Blessed Peter	"	"	"	"	
Blessed Mary Tocuan	"	"	"	"	
Blessed Agnes Taquea	"	"	"	"	
Blessed Mary Xoum	"	"	"	"	
Blessed Gaspar Cotenda	"	"	"	"	
Blessed Francis	"	"	"	"	
Blessed Peter	Tertiaries, Martyrs in Japan.	"	"	"	
Blessed Lewis Giaciqui		"	"	"	
Blessed Lucy (his wife)		"	"	"	
Blessed Andrew } their children		"	"	"	
Blessed Francis }		"	"	"	
Blessed Francis Curobiori		"	"	"	
Blessed Caius Jemon		"	"	"	
Blessed Magdalen Chiotā		"	"	"	
Blessed Frances		"	"	"	
Blessed John Tomachi		"	"	"	
Blessed Dominic	"	"	"	"	
Blessed Michael	Martyrs in Japan.	Earlier part of 17th century.	"	"	
Blessed Thomas			"	"	
Blessed Paul			"	"	
Blessed Romanus			"	"	
Blessed Leo			"	"	
Blessed James Faiascida			"	"	
Blessed Matthew Alvarez			"	"	
Blessed John Imamura			"	"	
Blessed Paul			"	"	
Blessed Michael Jamada			"	"	

Name.	Order.	Date.	Feast.	Page.
Blessed Lawrence	3rd		June 1	159
Blessed Lewis Nifaci	"		"	"
Blessed Francis	"		"	"
Blessed Dominic	"		"	"
Blessed Louisa	"		"	"
Blessed Michael Fimonoia	"		"	"
Blessed Paul Fimonoia	"		"	"
Blessed Dominic Xobiori	"		"	"
Blessed Gaspar Fisogiro	"		"	"
Blessed Andrew Gioscinda	"		"	"
Blessed Andrew Tocuan	"		"	"
Blessed Cosmas Taquea	"		"	"
Blessed John Xoum	"		"	"
Blessed Dominic Georgi	"		"	"
Blessed Bartholomew	"		"	"
Blessed Anthony Chimura	"		"	"
Blessed John Ivananga	"		"	"
Blessed Alexis Nacamura	"		"	"
Blessed Leo Nacanisci	"		"	"
Blessed Michael Tascita	"		"	"
Blessed Matthias Cozaca	"		"	"
Blessed Romanus Matevoia	"		"	"
Blessed Matthias Nacano	"		"	"
Blessed John Motaiana	"		"	"
Blessed Thomas Cotenda	"		"	"
Blessed Simon Quiota	"		"	"
Blessed Magdalen	"		"	"
Blessed Thomas Guengoro	"		"	"
Blessed Mary	"		"	"
Blessed James	"		"	"
Blessed Joachim Firaiana	"		"	"
Blessed Leo Sucheimon	"		"	"
Blessed John Foiamon	"		"	"
Blessed Mark Kineimon	"		"	"
Blessed Thomas Coianagui	"		"	"
Blessed Anthony Giamando	"		"	"
Blessed James Densci	"		"	"
Blessed Lawrence Rocuiemon	"		"	"
Blessed Paul Sanciqui	"		"	"
Blessed Bartholomew Mofioie	"		"	"
Blessed James Yago	"		"	"
Blessed John Kangata	"		"	"
Blessed Anthony Sanga	"		"	"
Blessed Magdalen	"		"	"
Blessed Anthony (a Corean)	"		"	"
Blessed Mary	"		"	"
Blessed John	"		"	"
Blessed Peter	"		"	"
Blessed Paul Tanaca	"		"	"
Blessed Mary	"		"	"
Blessed Elizabeth Fernandez	"		"	"
Blessed Ignatius	"		"	"
Blessed Apollonius	"		"	"
Blessed Dominic Xamada	"		"	"
Blessed Clare	"		"	"

Tertiaris,
Martyrs in Japan.

Rosarians, Martyrs in Japan.

Earlier part of 17th century.

Name.	Order.	Date.	Feast.	Page.
Blessed Dominic Nacano . . . . .	...		June 1	159
Blessed Bartholomew Xichiemon . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Damian Jamichi . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Michael . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Thomas Xiquiro . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Rufus Iscimola . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Clement Vom . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Anthony . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Dominic Ongata . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Catharine . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Mary Tanaura ¹ . . . . .	...		" "	"
Blessed Martin Porres, C.	3rd	1569-1639	Nov. 5	309
Blessed John Massias, Lay Brother, C.	1st	1585-1645	Oct. 3	271
Blessed Francis Possadas, C.	"	1643-1713	Sept. 20	263
Blessed Lewis Mary Grignon de Montfort, C.	3rd	1673-1716	May 23	139
Blessed Peter Sanz, B.M.	1st	1680-1747	May 27	146
Blessed Francis Serrano, M.	Martyrs } in China	1695-1749	" "	"
Blessed John Alcober, M.		1694-1749	" "	"
Blessed Joachim Royo, M.		1691-1749	" "	"
Blessed Frances Diaz, M.		1713-1749	" "	"
Blessed Dominic Henares, B.M.	"	1765-1838	July 11	191
Blessed Vincent Yen, M.	"	1765-1838	" "	"
Blessed Joseph Peter Uyen, M. (catechist)	3rd	1775-1838	" "	"
Blessed Clement Ignatius Delgado y Cebrian, B.M.	1st	1761-1838	" "	"
Blessed Joseph Fernandez, M.	"	1775-1838	" "	"
Blessed Dominic Dieu, <i>alias</i> Hanh, M.	"	1772-1838	" "	"
Blessed Peter Tù, M.	"	1793-1838	" "	"
Blessed Joseph Canh, M. (physician)	3rd	1768-1838	" "	"
Blessed Dominic Tuoc, M.	1st	1775-1839	" "	"
Blessed Thomas Du, M.	"	1839	" "	"
Blessed Dominic Dóan, <i>alias</i> Xuyén, M.	"	1839	" "	"
Blessed Francis Xavier Mâu (catechist)	3rd	1799-1839	" "	"
Blessed Dominic Uy, M. (catechist)	"	1813-1839	" "	"
Blessed Thomas Dê, M. (tailor)	"	1812-1839	" "	"
Blessed Augustine Mói, M. (peasant)	"	1808-1839	" "	"
Blessed Stephen Vinh, M. (peasant)	"	1814-1839	" "	"
Blessed Joseph Hien, M.	1st	1770-1840	" "	"
Blessed Thomas Toan, M. (catechist)	3rd	1840	" "	"
Blessed Dominic Trach, <i>alias</i> Doai, M.	1st	1840	" "	"
Blessed Augustine Schœffler ² (Priest of the Paris Society of Foreign Missions)	3rd	1822-1851	" "	"

¹ There is some discrepancy in the lists given by different authors as to the number and classification of the native Japanese Martyrs. The Lessons of the Breviary merely state that out of the two hundred and five Martyrs beatified by Pius IX. on July 7, 1867, "more than half belonged to the Order of Preachers." The list given above is taken from that printed by Very Revd. Father B. Wilberforce, O.P., in his "Lives of Dominican Missionaries in Japan," and which he copied from a little Belgian publication issued for the Triduo held in honour of the Beatified Martyrs.

² The blessed servant of God, Augustine Schœffler, was born A.D. 1822 in the diocese of Nancy in France, and was a pupil in the *Petit Séminaire* at Pont-à-Mousson at the time that the Abbé Jandel, afterwards Master-General of the

Name.	Order.	Date.	Feast.	Page.
Blessed Francis Chien, <i>alias</i> Chieü (catechist)	...	19th century.	July 11	191
Blessed Peter Tuan (secular priest)	...		"	"
Blessed Bernard Dué (secular priest)	...		"	"
Blessed Joseph Nien, <i>alias</i> Vién (secular priest)	...		"	"
Blessed Augustine Huy (soldier)	...		"	"
Blessed Nicholas The (soldier)	...		"	"
Martyrs in the Dominican Mission of Eastern Tonquin.				
Blessed Dominic or Nicholas Dat (soldier)	...		"	"

Dominican Order, was at the head of that establishment. The young Augustine was received into the Third Order and made his profession at Nancy in 1846, in which year he joined the Paris Society of Foreign Missions. In the following year he was sent to Western Tonquin, where he laboured zealously in the districts committed to his charge until he received the crown of martyrdom, being beheaded at Son-Tay on May 1, 1851. He was beatified by Pope Leo XIII. with the other seventy-six Martyrs of Annam and China, A.D. 1900.

THE END

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